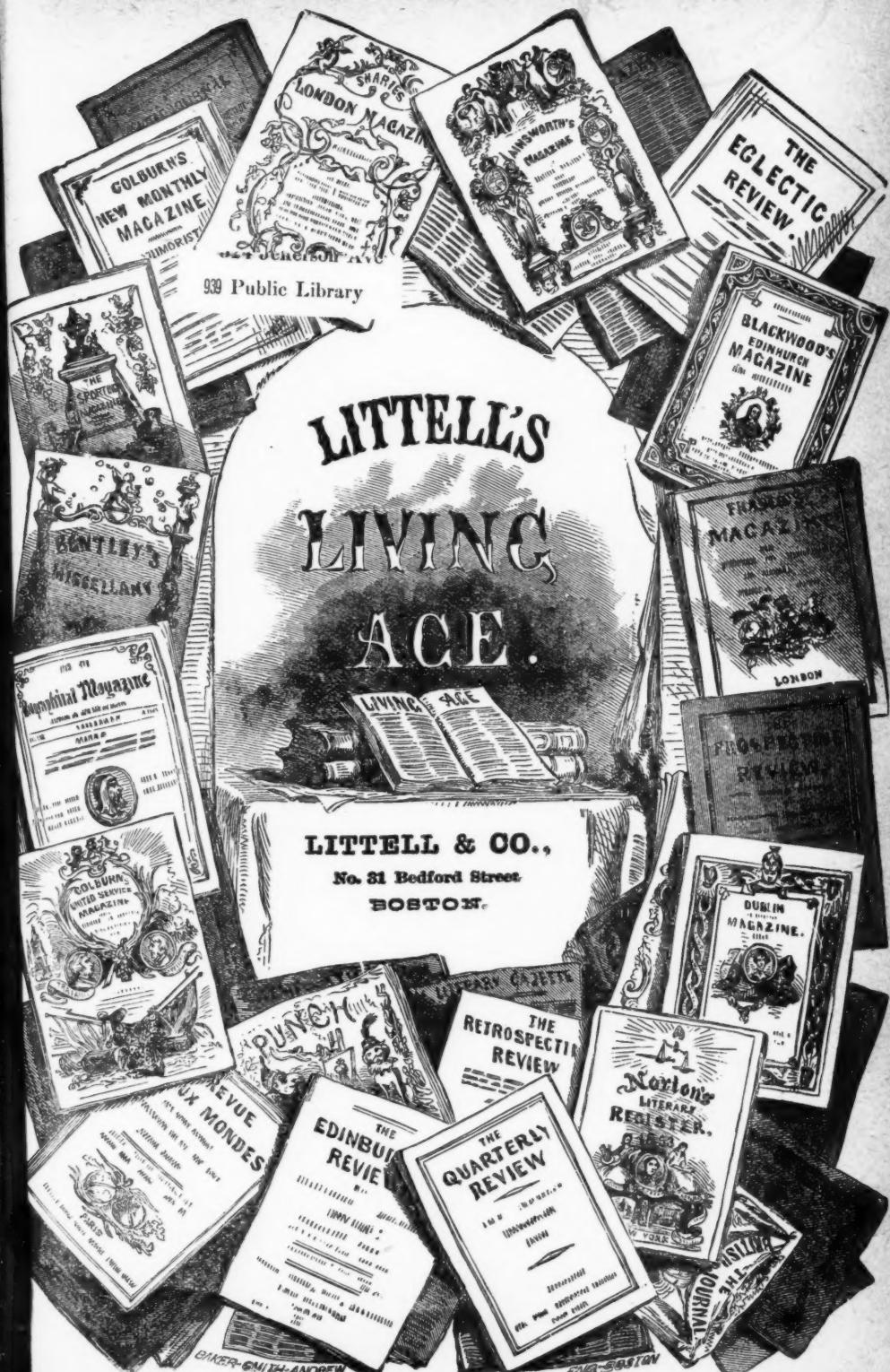


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LITTELL'S LIVING AGE.

Fifth Series,
Volume LXXVII. }

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Vol. CXIIL

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MIKE HOURIGAN'S PUP.

DON'T be shpakin' at all to Mike Hourigan's
pup;
'Tis your wake an' no less av ye're wakin'
him up.
He denuded the town of sheep, poulthry, an'
cats,
An' he has himself shtuffed wid ould breeches
an' hats.
Is it poison? — we feasted him times by the
score,
An' he licked it like butther, an' axed us for
more;
An' a nate charge o' buckshot, why, Andy an'
Tim,
I tell ye 'tis jist vintilation to him.
Small comfort ye'll see
Through the world as ye jog,
If ye're apt to make free
Wid a Prodesdan dog.

Faith, an' Michael himself got a shmall little
taste
Of the ways an' the means of that heretic
baste.
For his grandfather Kelly, the head of the
clan,
Departed in peace wid the shpasms, poor
man!
An' his cwcoat wid brass buttons, of illigant
make,
That he bought second-hand for his mistress's
wake,
He bequeathed it to Mike, wid his blackthorn
an' hat,
For his natheral life, an' his heirs aither that.
Here's a caution to each, —
Through the world as ye jog,
Be houldin' no speech
Wid a Prodesdan dog.

Now Mike, decent boy, had a girl in his eye,
Wid tayshpoons an' cows an' a thrife laid by;
An', axin' no lave of that arrogant brute,
He laid himself out in the family shuit.
An' what wid the buttons, the chramme in his
hair,
An', maybe, the likes of a kiss here an' there,
He prospered so well that she gave her con-
sent,
The priest would get word for the week be-
fore Lent.
Small comfort ye'll see
Through the world as ye jog,
If ye're apt to make free
Wid a Prodesdan dog.

"Shure, Michael," says Bridget, "my wits
was astray;
What would I be either, forgettin' the tay?"
She shits to the cupboard, an' "Musha!"
she cries,
"Ye'd be handy at helpin' yourself, I'd sur-
mise.
Make free wid my shpoons! och, it passes be-
lief!"
"Is it me, thin?" says Michael, "ye'd make
me a thief?"

"I would, sorr," says she, wid a catch in the
throat,
"An' 'tis jinglin' they are in the tail of your
cwoat."

Ah! take my advice
Through the world as ye jog,
An' never look twice
At a Prodesdan dog.

"Is it me condiscind to your shpoons an' your cash?

Faix, I'd not soil my hand wid the dirty low thrash.
Good-day, Miss O'Leary," says Mike, an' wid that

He whistles the dog, an' he feels for his hat.
"Hear that, think!" says Bridget, an' faith

" Hear that, thin ! " says Bridget, an' faith,
on the word
A noise like a spicial collection was heard;
Thin up comes the puppy, from wanderin' at
large.

Wid each wag of his tail like a cavalry charge.
Here's a caution to each.—

Here's a caution to each,
Through the world as ye
Be houldin' no speech
Wid a Prodesdan dog.

Says Bridget, " Black dhrames to that Prod-
esdan pup !

"All right this," says Mike, with a turn of the

"Ah, no ! thin," says Mike, wid a turn of the eye,
"I wouldn't say 'chewed ; ' shure, they're only put by.

The fortune's invested securely, why not?
Though it couldn't be rayalized jist on the
shot.

But, Biddy, asthore, till we have him deceased,
It wouldn't be prudent to shpake to the priest.

Small comfort ye'll see
Through the world as ye jog,
If ye ever make free
Wid a Prodesdan dog.

Spectator. **FREDERICK LANGBRIDGE.**

A SONG.

I saw a weeping maiden
A-searching in the morn
For love that's half a rosebud,
For love that's half a Thorn;
She sought him on the hilltop
And o'er the dewy lea,
But he was standing in the shade,
Was waiting there with me!

He sang not in the meadow,
 He piped not near the stream,
Nor hid in ferny forests,
 The darling of her dream :
He lurked not in the poppies,
 He shone not in the sky ;
But called to her from out my heart,
 And yet she passed him by !

Athenaeum.

From The Contemporary Review.
FRENCH POLITICS.
 BY GABRIAL MONOD.

SINCE the elections of 1889 and the collapse of Boulangism, the one salient feature in the French political situation has been its stability—a stability which contrasts strongly with those incessant ministerial changes which were coming to be regarded as inseparable from parliamentary government. For a whole year we have never drawn the attention of our English readers to French politics, for the simple reason that there has been nothing in French politics to draw their attention to. But this absence of political disturbance is itself a fact worth noting, and of which we may well ask the cause.

Let us begin by admitting that some share of the credit is due to the head of the government himself. M. Carnot continues to play his part in a manner so correct, serene, and dignified as to exercise the happiest influence on the public—and especially on the parliamentary—mind; an influence all the more effectual for being apparently unconscious, and awaking no susceptibilities in those whom it touches. M. Carnot keeps strictly within his constitutional powers; his individual will never makes itself felt; he contents himself with representing the State, under all circumstances, with a dignified propriety; he lends himself to no intrigues, gives occasion to no complaints, takes a willing part in every good and useful work, and once, or even twice, in the year makes a progress through the departments, which always increases his popularity and the respect in which his name is held. His last visit to the south was really a triumphal progress; but M. Carnot always effaces his own personality, and attributes the acclamations that greet him to the popularity of the republic which he has the honor to represent. By this demeanor he has helped to make it everywhere accepted as a system of regular and peaceful government, which respects all rights and awakens no anxieties, and to break the old and tenacious association of ideas which identified the word republic with the word revolution. Following the initiative of M. Carnot, the whole country is

now endeavoring to make the republican régime a régime of stability and peace.

And in this encomium the government also deserves its share. M. de Freycinet had the wisdom, when he became president of the Council, to retain his old portfolio; and he has thus carried, so to speak, into the prime ministry the *prestige* he had gained as minister of war, and, at the same time, given to the War Department a pledge of that continuity of policy of which the need has been everywhere recognized. He has, moreover, by dint of a tact and elasticity which border on the marvellous, contrived to keep himself in favor with all parties. None of them has absolute confidence in him; none of them recognizes him as its chief; but all wish to make use of him, and he has hopes and promises to hold out to all. His Cabinet partakes of the conciliating tone and chameleon tints of his own character. It contains Moderates like M. Ribot and M. Develle; Opportunists like MM. Rouvier, J. Roche, and Fallières; Radicals like MM. Bourgeois and Yves Guyot; and, above all, a man whose personal value as a politician and parliamentary tactician is all the greater for his being hampered by no other principle and no other programme than that of spreading the sail whichever way the wind blows—M. Constans. The energy displayed by M. Constans in the struggle with Boulangism gave him a *prestige* of which the whole ministry has reaped the benefit. This heterogeneous Cabinet has shown in the conduct of affairs a skill and prudence which have kept it quietly in office all this time in presence of a Chamber so divided as to make any solid majority utterly impossible. It cannot be denied, however, that the solidity of the ministry, which for two years had seemed quite unshakable, was menaced to some extent at the close of last session; and that the checks sustained by M. Ribot in one instance, and M. de Freycinet in another, on insignificant questions, were not far from breaking it up. The truth is that it has lasted so long only because it has avoided pronouncing itself clearly on any question; it has lived upon compromises, and on the strength of the general feeling that, after the keen alarms of the

Boulangist enterprise, it was above all things desirable not to provoke a ministerial crisis. But the Cabinet has within itself disintegrating elements, which are very likely to make themselves felt during the new session of Parliament. M. de Freycinet himself is visibly weary, and it would not be surprising if he should yield to the desire for repose; and, moreover, there exists within the Cabinet itself a marked antagonism between M. Ribot and M. Bourgeois on the one hand, and M. Constans on the other. The latter has several times shown a disposition to separate his own person and policy from that of his colleagues; and this antagonism is sure to break out into open strife whenever, by the retirement of M. de Freycinet, the question of the premiership comes to the front. If the only requirement were to find the man who combined the greatest energy of will with the greatest skill in guiding and persuading Parliament, M. Constans would be the very man for the post. But M. Carnot has little sympathy with the character of M. Constans; and MM. Ribot and Bourgeois are certain to do everything in their power to bar the way.

Nevertheless, there are in the Chamber itself and in the parliamentary situation some permanent factors which make for stability, and which may neutralize these divergent tendencies and prolong the existence of the Freycinet government. I recognize such elements of stability in the great importance assumed at the present moment by diplomatic and economic questions, to the detriment of all mere questions of internal policy. One of the chief results of the Boulangist movement, and of its collapse, has been to disorganize and render powerless for the time all the parties which mixed themselves up with it—the Extreme Radicals, the Bonapartists, and the Royalists. Bonapartism, indeed, had little to lose. It might, indeed, answer to a permanent tendency of all centralized democracies, but it lacked the one thing which is essential to a Cæsarian party—a popular and capable Caesar. The death of Prince Jerome Napoleon, while it left a free field to Prince Victor (who was already the real chief of

the party), gave him no accession of force. Prince Napoleon was at least well known; his intellectual powers were indisputable. Prince Victor is—to the masses at least—an *inconnu*, and he represents nothing but a personal ambition, without greatness and without a future. Royalism has the advantage of attaching itself less to persons than to a principle. The political incapacity of which the Comte de Paris has given proof, the ridiculous escapade of the Duc d'Orléans, whose conviction and imprisonment it was impossible for anybody to take seriously, and even the deplorable alliance with the Boulangists, would have done but little permanent injury to the Royalist idea, if only it had retained the thing to which it really owed its force—its strict cohesion with Clericalism. But this cohesion has been broken. Pope Leo XIII., with that penetrating instinct with which he always apprehends the conditions of existence of modern society, perceived that the Catholic Church, if she was to continue to exercise any influence over it, must beware of identifying herself exclusively with any particular form of government, and must rather accept all, in order to find a place in each; and he had also the astuteness to perceive that, in the present state of the relations between France and Italy, the Church had everything to gain by avoiding a state of open hostility with the Republican government of France. In this view the higher French clergy have followed the pope, and many of them have openly declared that the moment has come for abandoning all systematic opposition to the Republic, and endeavoring rather to induce it to adopt an attitude more favorable to the Church, and to create for themselves by legitimate means a majority in the Republican Chambers. The Church no longer seeks to destroy the Republic; she would prefer to govern it, or at least to take a share in its government. Cardinal Lavigerie was the first to give utterance to this policy. His missionary work in Africa led him into hearty accord with the colonizing activity of France. He openly declared, by word and deed, his adhesion to the Republican régime. The Bishop of Grenoble, followed by the Bishop of Bordeaux, the

Bishop of Poitiers, and these again by others, followed the example of Cardinal Lavigerie; and the Conservative party, which has so long held firmly together in denouncing the Republican system as incompatible with the interests of religion, now finds itself divided into at least three opposing sections — and this, although we leave altogether out of count both the Bonapartists and the tiny group of irreconcilable Legitimists, who refuse to recognize the Comte de Paris, and maintain the right of the Spanish Bourbons to the throne of France. First, there are the Orleanists pure and simple, led by the Comte d'Haussonville, who has succeeded M. Bocher in the leadership of the party. Their numbers, their energy, and the force of their convictions diminish from day to day; but they cling to the Restoration as indispensable, and enter the electoral contest only to affirm the monarchical principle. Then there are the moderate Conservatives, led by MM. Piou and De la Marzelle. These take a purely constitutional standpoint, and seek to ally themselves with the Republican Left Centre. They make no excessive claims in the matter of religion, and only ask for a modification of the anti-clerical policy of the government. Finally, there is the purely Catholic party, which is in course of formation out of the two preceding groups. It declares itself indifferent to the form of government, and will go to the electors with a purely social and religious programme. The most eminent members of this group are, in the Chamber of Deputies, M. de Mun, and, in the Senate, M. Chesnelong; and they dream of an ideal policy at once Catholic, democratic, and socialistic. In our opinion, M. d'Haussonville is right when he says that the electors will be even less disposed to enrol themselves in the Catholic than in the Royalist party, and that the only result of all these subdivisions will be to throw many Conservative electors into the arms of moderate Republicanism. We must wait to see whether these Catholic socialistic ideas take any hold on the mass of the people; but it is meanwhile certain that the development of such views within the bosom of the Conservative party itself

has paralyzed its forces, and sensibly diminished the asperities of party politics by bringing about a truce in the conflict between Monarchs and Republicans. As to the advanced Radicals, they have at this moment neither chiefs nor programme. They dare not name revision, so utterly has it been discredited by the Boulangist use of it; and it is not the least use calling themselves Socialists, for all the parties are Socialists now. M. de Mun, M. Clémenceau, M. Constans, M. de Cassagnac are all Socialists, each after his fashion. The fact is, that in France at the present moment all questions of internal policy are laid to rest, and this unwonted calm has produced in Parliament a sort of universal good-will which gives the ministry an indefinite lease of life.

But while ministerial and administrative questions have thus sunk to the second rank, the subjects of finance and international policy have risen to an almost exclusive importance.

For twenty-one years France has been alone in Europe. From the time of the Congress of Berlin in 1878, she may indeed be said to have resumed her part in that detestable discord which goes by the name of the European Concert; but it has been as an insignificant member of the orchestra, not as one of the first violins. Her position was the result of her defeat. But the enemies of Republicanism of course laid it to the form of government, and averred that a Republic was necessarily isolated, while a Monarchy would have nothing to do but take its choice of alliances. The history of the nineteenth century does not bear out this theory. Except for two short intervals, under Louis Philippe and under Napoleon III., when the *entente cordiale* subsisted between France and England, France has been isolated ever since 1830. In 1840 all Europe was in coalition against her. In 1870 no one raised a finger to avert her fate. On the contrary, every one had something to gain from her abasement. Russia seized the opportunity to efface the consequences of the Treaty of Paris, Italy to possess herself of Rome, England

to develop her commerce, and Austria to make her own arrangements with the new German Empire. Since '89 France has been always under suspicion. She has never had a solid alliance or an enduring friendship. When she was strong, or was supposed to be strong, she could make shift without it. But to-day she needs allies; first, to counterpoise the Triple Alliance, and next, as an answer to those who, even in France, assert that the republic is naturally regarded with distrust by all monarchical governments. This is the explanation of the transports of delight with which the accounts of the reception of our fleet at Cronstadt and St. Petersburg were received in France. To thoughtful minds the effect of these Russophile demonstrations, extravagant and puerile as they often are, and of the Russian mania for everything French, is not altogether reassuring. They realize that this hot and rapid friendship is not the outcome of any true identity of principles or policy, of material or intellectual interests, but simply of a common antipathy and a common fear; and that this passion of the French democracy for a czar, and of the Russian populace for a Republican democracy — this strange drawing together of two countries the most unfitted for mutual understanding and co-operation — may well result in such a heating of popular passions as may drive us into a European war which their respective governments have neither desired nor provided for. For our own part, we have already pointed out in these pages how, in our opinion, the true interests of France and Germany would lead each to seek the friendship of the other. France has nothing to gain from an alliance with Russia, even if she succeeded, by her aid, in obtaining a victory over Germany. But it must be recognized, on the other hand, that all reconciliation between France and Germany is impossible, so long as Germany keeps Alsace and Lorraine under the yoke; and that France is meanwhile placed in a position in which she must accept such alliances as are offered to her. She cannot reasonably be reproached for having thought it good policy to send her fleet cruising in the Baltic as soon as she was assured that it would meet with a friendly reception at Stockholm, a warm reception at Copenhagen, and an enthusiastic reception at Cronstadt. It was due to herself that she should thus take her part, and with a certain *éclat*, in those international ceremonials and civilities which the incessant activity of the German emperor has

brought into fashion. England, who had just been receiving the emperor with the cordiality due to a young, generous, and powerful sovereign closely allied by blood with her own reigning family, had the good taste and good feeling to emphasize the success of the voyage of the French squadron, and at the same time to deprive it of any exclusive character, by inviting the fleet to an official reception at Portsmouth. This brilliant reception, which produced a very happy effect on our navy, served also to dissipate the unfavorable impression created by the rumors which had been afloat that England was about to join the Triple Alliance for the purpose of maintaining the *status quo* in the Mediterranean.

The success of the Baltic cruise, and the sensation produced by the demeanor of the czar, who rose with all his court to listen standing to that "Marseillaise" to the strains of which France made war a century ago on crowns and thrones, was consummated by the spectacle of the grand manœuvres in the autumn. For the first time, it was a real army, an army of a hundred thousand men, that was mobilized in the plains of Champagne, of Lorraine, and of Burgundy (that is to say, in the countries which would become the theatre of war in case of a new German invasion), under the command of General Saussier, the general destined for the command-in-chief in time of war, and in the presence of the minister of war, M. de Freycinet, and of the chief of the general staff, General de Miribel. To add to the character of solemnity given to the occasion as a sort of public reconstitution of the military forces of France, M. Carnot himself, for the first time, presided at the grand review in which the manœuvres terminated. It is true that some parts of our military organization — as, for instance, the relations between the commissariat and the command, the divisional artillery, and the quality of our cavalry and artillery horses — may be open to criticism; but the manœuvres as a whole produced on those who witnessed them the impression that the military forces of France were now so considerable that she has no need to give place to any one, or to suffer any longer in silence those secret or open humiliations which have not been spared her these twenty years. The able and prudent speeches of MM. de Freycinet and Carnot emphasized this aspect of the situation; they declared the determination of France to pursue a policy of peace, but at the same time to put up with no affront; and

they pointed to the attitude of Russia in relation to France as a proof that she has been able to inspire confidence in the continuity of her aims and the moderation of her acts.

The moral effect produced by the Cronstadt reception and the autumn manoeuvres was very great. Nothing, indeed, had really changed in the European situation within the last year; France and Russia had long been approaching each other, driven by the necessities of their respective positions; and the reorganization of the French army had been going on for many years. But the celebrations of this year have given the nation a new sense of moral and material recovery; they have made her conscious of her strength, of what she has gained by twenty years of hard effort, and also of the value of wisdom and self-concentration. And they have at the same time demonstrated to all Europe that a change has taken place in the equilibrium of political forces, and that the period of the absolute hegemony of Germany is ended. General Caprivi himself recognized this fact when he observed in his speech at Osnabrück that the *rapprochement* between France and Russia meant the re-establishment of the balance of power.

And now, what will be the effect of this new situation on the chances of peace or war? It is very difficult to foretell. On the one hand, France, conscious of her improved position in Europe, will feel with the less impatient bitterness the diminution of her strength caused by the loss of Alsace and Lorraine; but, on the other hand, the very sense of her strength, and that of her allies, may lead her to adopt an arrogant tone, or to make imprudent demonstrations. The patriotism of Frenchmen, free to express itself without fear, may grow headstrong and high-minded. Their enemies, meanwhile, will doubtless become more circumspect, in view of the new grouping of the European powers; but they may, at the same time, think themselves seriously menaced, and proceed to seek in war the advantages which peace no longer assures to them. A general disarmament becomes less and less probable; and how is it possible long to keep the peace, with armaments so tremendous, so crushingly burdensome, especially when every nation except Russia has reached the utmost limit of possible effort, while Russia can go on arming and fortifying for an almost indefinite time at the expense of all the rest? How is the Emperor William, with his irritable and

impatient character, to be expected to go on watching year after year the gradual lessening of the preponderance of Germany, by the mere growth of her neighbors' strength, and the inevitable relaxation of the artificial bonds of the Triple Alliance?

A year ago the relations between France and Germany seemed to be steadily improving. On each side there was a certain desire for reconciliation. The German emperor seemed to be occupying himself exclusively with home affairs and social questions. In France, his speeches and his actions were followed with a feeling very much akin to sympathy. Some idealists even flattered themselves that he was on the eve of solving the Alsace-Lorraine difficulty by neutralization, or even by partial restitution. But since the spring of this year the relations between the two countries have again been chilled, not to say embittered. An incident of secondary importance contributed to this re-estrangement; and time enough has now perhaps elapsed for it to be not quite useless to say a few words on the subject, which has been very commonly misunderstood. I refer to the affair of the non-participation of French painters in the Berlin Exhibition.

I need not recall the incidents, which are fresh in every one's mind. But it will be remembered how, in 1890, the welcome given at Berlin to the French delegates attending the conference on social questions and the Medical Congress, the milder measures adopted in Alsace-Lorraine in the matter of passport regulations, and the warmth and evident sincerity with which the emperor avowed himself the friend of peace, had created in France an almost universal desire to be on friendly terms with Germany, and to carry on normal relations with her in all matters scientific, artistic, economic, and the like. The invitation addressed to French painters by the Society of Artists in Berlin, who were organizing the International Exhibition there for the spring of 1891, was favorably received by the leading men of the French school. The few isolated protests which were raised against their taking part in the Exhibition would have produced no effect at all if it had not been for the unfortunate accident of the Empress Frederick's thinking it necessary to visit Paris at that particular moment, with her daughter, Princess Margaret. It was in vain that she attempted to give a purely private character to her visit. She could not prevent the reporters from getting on her track and commenting on her every

step, nor the journals which live upon scandal and make a business of Chauvinism, from making her visit the pretext for violent attacks on Germany and on those French painters who were intending to exhibit at Berlin, nor rowdy politicians from playing their own game by stirring up the popular passions. M.M. Déroulède, Cassagnac, and Rochefort distinguished themselves particularly in this campaign; and M. Déroulède seized the opportunity to bring his famous "Ligue des Patriotes" into evidence again. It was not long before most of the painters who had promised to send to the Berlin Exhibition withdrew their support — some, like M. Detaille, declaring that they had been deceived, and that patriotism forbade their exhibiting in the Prussian capital, others simply excusing themselves as yielding to scruples they did not share. A very few — among whom was M. Bouguereau — had the courage of their opinions and sent to the Exhibition all the same. Foreigners supposed that this sudden change in the attitude of the French artists was due to the nagging of a few journalists and the ravings of a few fanatics; they said that the French are always carried away by who clamors loudest, and that in France madmen are allowed to lay down the law for men in their right senses. But it really was not the newspapers that decided the question in this case. There was a real misunderstanding as to the position of the Empress Frederick, whose visit, little as she intended it, seemed to the French painters to be of the nature of an official step on the part of the German government; but, more than this, it was regarded as a *ballon d'essai* to prepare the way for a future visit of the emperor himself. If such a visit had taken place, somebody or other would have been sure to insult him, and then the only choice for France would have been between humiliation and a war — for indeed it was already believed that the young emperor was perfectly ready for war in case of the least offence being offered to his mother. For those who entertained this belief, it was no mere Chauvinistic fanaticism, but an act of wise and thoughtful patriotism, to abstain from going to Berlin, and thus to warn the emperor that the moment had not yet come when he could hope to visit Paris without danger to the peace of Europe. And William II, forthwith took upon him to justify this view, by meeting the refusal of the French artists with a return to the most vexatious measures on the frontier, and with increased strictness in the matter of

passports. This puerile retort, by which the Alsatiens were punished for the offences of the French, has at least served to bring out this truth — that there is a real solidarity between France and Alsace, that so long as the Alsatiens are oppressed no reconciliation is possible between France and Germany, and that if petty incidents, like this of the French artists and the Exhibition, are enough to agitate two great nations, it is because they are only the symptoms of a deep-lying mischief, of an essentially grave and perilous international situation.

This tension between France and Germany was increased by the success of the French Exhibition at Moscow, by the Russophile demonstration which followed the Cronstadt reception, and finally by the very undiplomatic speech of the emperor at Erfurt, where he recalled the days of humiliation which had prepared for Germany the hour of her revenge.

On the other hand, two fresh incidents have occurred to alleviate these painful impressions — the performance of "Lohengrin" in Paris, and the suppression of the passport system.

At first sight, it seems simply ridiculous that the performance of an opera which has been played for forty years on every stage in Europe should have any political importance whatever; and when we find the relations between France and Germany actually at the mercy of a question of music or paintings, it might be possible to draw unflattering conclusions on the subject of French frivolity. But it must be remembered that all human affairs have two different scales of importance: they have their value as they are in themselves, and their symbolic and representative value. It has been seen how questions of general policy were involved in the affair of the French artists. The "Lohengrin" question had also attained in the minds of many Frenchmen a national importance. Not only was Wagner, on account of the various hard hits at the French contained in his works, and especially on account of his feeble and harmless farce on the capitulation of Paris, composed in 1871, regarded — by those who had not read him — as a fanatical anti-Frenchman, but it was also vaguely felt that the triumph of Wagnerian music in France is the confession of an indisputable German sovereignty. The Wagnerian drama is the culminating point of that magnificent artistic evolution which begins with Bach and Handel, and passes on through Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven,

Schubert, Weber, and Schumann, to end in Wagner, and which towers above the musical creations of other countries as incontestably as Italian painting over that of all other painters. Now the Wagnerian drama was claimed by Wagner himself and by his disciples as an essentially national outgrowth, in opposition to the French or Italian opera. The Bayreuth theatre could never have been created but for that German national sentiment which, kindled by the victories of 1870, recognized in the work of Wagner the true expression of the national genius, nor could it have existed until German unity was a *fait accompli*. To open the lyric stage of Paris to this music, whose superb beauty must make it, for a time at least, regnant and supreme, is to recognize as it were the hegemony of Germany in its highest and purest form—in the form, therefore, to which French sensibilities must be most keenly alive. And to these two objections—the first sufficiently puerile, the second not quite without justification—must be added the jealousy of French composers and publishers, who recognize in the Wagnerian music a formidable competitor, the inherent *gaminerie* of the Paris crowd, ever glad of an excuse for shouting and hissing, and the intrigues of the anti-Republican parties, eager to cast suspicion on the patriotism of the government, and to create an agitation out of which, by happy chance, might spring a riot, a revolution, or even a war.

It was owing to all these causes together that "Lohengrin" became a political question. As long ago as 1884, M. Carvalho wanted to play it at the Opéra Comique. He was prevented by the clamors of a section of the press, which declared that a theatre subventioned by the government could not perform the works of a foreign enemy. Wagner was then still living. In 1888, M. Lamoureux, the courageous and admirable manager of the concerts of the Champs Elysées, undertook to produce "Lohengrin" at the Eden Theatre. Wagner was dead; M. Lamoureux's was a purely private enterprise. One might have thought that the anti-Wagnerians would have quieted down. But unluckily the Boulangist agitation was then in full blast, and the Ligue des Patriotes, which was placed at the service of the Boulangists, welcomed the opportunity of showing its strength in the streets. M. Goblet, then prime minister, dared not support M. Lamoureux; and notwithstanding the success, from a musical point of view, of the first night, "Lohengrin"

had to be given up, at an enormous loss. MM. Ritt and Gailhard have been more fortunate; and it is at the headquarters of the musical drama in France, at the theatre most heavily subventioned of all French theatres, and with M. Lamoureux as conductor, that "Lohengrin" has been performed at last amidst enthusiastic applause, richly merited by the beauty of the work itself, by its perfect execution, and by the talent of the singers—MM. Van Dyck and Renaud, Mesdames Caron and Fierens. Public opinion had become almost unanimous in demanding that a masterpiece which had already been received with applause at Lyons, Rouen, Angers, and Bordeaux, should be performed in Paris. The opposition was by this time represented by the mere *débris* of the Boulangist party; and the government energetically supported the managers of the opera, and indeed was not sorry to show that it was not going to allow a handful of bawlers to take the law out of its hands. It had had the weakness, some months before, to forbid the representation of M. Sardou's "Thermidor" at the Théâtre Français, in order to please a few fanatics of the Extreme Left, who declared the piece an attack on the French Revolution. They were not disposed to fall into such a mistake again. The almost exaggerated energy with which every attempt at a riot was put down and the unanimity of the press, with the exception of two or three papers of no moral importance whatever (such as the *Autorité* and the *Intransigeant*), in commanding the action of the government produced an excellent impression in France and in Europe. It showed that the government was conscious of its strength, and determined to make itself respected; and that the mass of the public was not to be carried away by the factitious clamors of a sham patriotism, and was no longer disposed to mix up political antipathies with questions of a purely artistic nature.

Another thing which occurred at the same moment tended still further to appease public feeling, and to dispel the anxieties aroused by the Erfurt speech. This was the entire suppression of the passport regulations in Alsace-Lorraine. It would be difficult to convey any idea of the state of irritation kept up both in France and in Alsace by this passport system, by which the Alsatians were made incessantly conscious of the weight of the foreign yoke, while in France the old wound was being perpetually reopened. It was a constant humiliation to have to

ask permission to enter Alsace, to say why you were going there, to give the names of the persons you wished to see, to wait four or five weeks for an answer, and, as often as not, to receive at last a perfectly unjustified refusal. An instance taken from my own experience will show how the system worked. In 1889 I asked for a passport for Alsace, in order to visit my relatives. After six weeks' waiting I received a refusal. I at once published in the *Revue Historique* a note, in which I protested strongly against such treatment being dealt to a man of letters well known in Germany, and who had friends and fellow-workers in all the German universities. A month later I was sent for to the Embassy, and informed that "the reasons for the refusal having no longer any existence, they would be happy to grant me a passport." "It comes a little late," I said to the clerk. "If it is not an improper question, I should very much like to know what were the reasons of the refusal—those reasons which no longer exist." He smiled and said: "You know very well there have never been any. Passports are hardly ever refused for personal reasons. Look here," he added, pointing to a packet of papers lying heaped upon the table, "look at this heap of passports. Half of them have been refused—not one for any personal reason." "I always suspected as much," I answered. "I suspected the distribution was purely arbitrary, and that it was left to chance which should be granted and which refused; but I am glad to have it from your mouth." The object of the regulations was, of course, to break the ties, and especially the family ties, between Alsace and France, and to induce as large an emigration of Alsatians as possible. From this point of view the German government did to some extent succeed in their purpose; but, on the other hand, they created a feeling of irritation throughout the province which was communicated to all classes of the population, and which, so far as the Germanization of the country was concerned, cost them all the fruits of the liberal and benevolent administration of General Manteuffel. They ruined Alsace, and with Alsace the German immigrants who had settled there since 1871. They risked reprisals, some day or other, on the part of the French. They perpetuated in time of peace a state of war; they seemed to doubt the reality of their own conquest.

It is difficult to say what has been the principal motive of the step now taken by William II. Was it done to satisfy the

Alsatians? Was it to undo the ill-effects of the Erfurt speech, and to give a pledge of his pacific intentions? Was he afraid of reprisals? Did he wish to reverse a measure on which Prince Bismarck had laid peculiar emphasis? All these reasons may have had their influence on his mind; but it seems to me that his chief motive was to show his confidence in his own strength and in the stability of the German dominion in Alsace, and at the same time to assert before all Europe his desire for the maintenance of peace. One thing is certain. The measure took instant effect. It regained for the emperor many of the sympathies which had been estranged, and produced a sensible relaxation of the tension of feeling in France.

While these fluctuations of feeling and opinion were going on between France and Germany, something very similar was happening between France and Italy. The fall of Signor Crispi, and the accession of the Rudini ministry, awakened on both sides of the Alps the natural sympathies that exist between the two nations, and every one began to hope for the re-establishment of the *entente cordiale*. But there are three hindrances. There is the Triple Alliance, which it is morally impossible for King Humbert to abandon, but which deeply wounds French feeling, inasmuch as it practically guarantees to Germany her conquests of 1871; there is the commercial policy of France, from which Italy suffers cruelly; and, finally, there are the recent demonstrations of French Catholics in favor of the pope, which have convinced the Italians that many Frenchmen are desirous of restoring the temporal power. Absurd as this idea may be, it does find credence in Italy; and it was this which led to a series of anti-French demonstrations on the occasion of the great pilgrimage which, under the guidance of the French bishops, brought more than ten thousand Frenchmen of all classes to the Vatican. On the other hand the inauguration of the Garibaldi monument at Nice on the 4th of October afforded the French government, and French Republicans generally, the opportunity of repudiating all idea of a restoration of the temporal power, and declaring their solidarity with the Italian Liberals. Thus, with Italy, as with Germany, if the position of affairs is not quite as satisfactory as it was at the end of 1890, it is, at any rate, a great deal better than it was in 1888.

The Freycinet ministry reaps the advantage of this general improvement in

our international relations. Everybody knows that the position France has gained is owing to a political stability at home to which she has been too long a stranger, to the steady accord between the ministry and the majority, which has been kept unbroken from the beginning of the present Parliament, and which enables foreign powers to place some confidence in the persistence of our policy and the firmness of our decisions. So that, be the ultimate advantages of our friendship with Russia what they may, the Russian alliance is, at any rate for the moment, a trump card in the hand of the Freycinet ministry, and a guarantee of its remaining in power.

Another important factor has been the urgency of economic questions. These are of two kinds, and both have been of use to the government; the government has gained by the discussion of the customs tariff, and it has gained by the discussion of the labor question.

From the moment of the nominations for the Chamber of Deputies in 1889, it was easy to foresee that the customs question was to be a tranquilizing element in our internal politics. The treaties of commerce concluded by France with the neighboring countries were to expire in 1892, and it was necessary to decide what commercial system to adopt, and, if the treaties were not to be renewed, what tariffs to impose.

In order that this somewhat heavy task might be carried to a successful completion, it was imperative that it should not be interrupted by any ministerial crisis. Moreover, since politics and economics are, as matters of opinion, absolutely independent of one another, there had to be a truce to political dissensions in order to allow of a simple re-grouping into protectionists and free traders. It is to this that we owe, in great part, a serenity of the political atmosphere such as we have not experienced for twenty years. The Customs Commission became the centre of parliamentary life; and that commission knew nothing of Royalists or Republicans, Clericals or Democrats. Free trade and protection were its only standards, and every one was ranged under the one or the other. And the Conservatives being, as it happened, for the most part protectionists, as they are mainly large agriculturists or large manufacturers, took good care not to embarrass the government as soon as they perceived that it was going, at least to some extent, to uphold protectionist principles.

Nothing is more interesting, from a psychological point of view, than the development of protectionist ideas in France during the last fifteen years. As far back as 1860, under the leadership of Napoleon III., France had adopted the free trade system — or rather the system of commercial treaties, by which friendly nations facilitate trade between themselves by mutual concessions as to the duties on raw material or on manufactured products. This expedient of the commercial treaties gave such an impetus to French industry that, in spite of the protests raised beforehand, public opinion up to 1870 remained universally favorable to it. The Liberals, in particular, made free trade an article of their creed. But from 1870 onwards things were changing, little by little, under various influences, till it ended in a complete revulsion of the popular opinion. The increased production of corn in Russia and in America, the diminution of the cost of transport, the introduction into Europe of butcher's meat from America and Australia, all this created a formidable amount of competition for the French agriculturist to meet. His stock and his crops were both threatened; and it was the more serious for him because the value of landed property in France is excessively high, owing to the minute subdivision of the land, and the almost superstitious attachment with which it inspires its owners. At the same time, this very subdivision of property, in the hands of ignorant peasants, hindered the progress of agriculture by acting as an obstacle to scientific farming and the employment of machinery, both of which require not only a certain amount of intelligence and education, but a certain amount of capital. For some time the entreaties of the farmers and graziers for protection against foreign competition were counterbalanced by the influence of the vine-growers, whose produce was much more remunerative than corn, and who, under the treaties of commerce, were able to export it on favorable terms. The populations of the south of France had long been ardent champions of free trade. But then came the phylloxera, and the phylloxera destroyed half the vineyards of France. Spanish and Italian wines, and raisin wines made with foreign raisins, began to compete, and forthwith the principles of free trade lost ground in the regions that had seemed most completely theirs. Several other countries were meanwhile abandoning free trade and adopting protection, and this with certain

obvious advantages. This was the case in Germany and in the United States. Russia, also, found in the protective system a means of development for her industries. French observers were struck by the results obtained; and they neglected to ask themselves whether the economic conditions of Russia and the United States were analogous to those of France, or whether France would do better to follow the example of England, who finds in the principle of free competition the strongest incentive to enterprise and progress, alike in agriculture, industry, and commerce.

To these purely economic influences were added, presently, others of a political kind. By Article II of the Treaty of Frankfort, Germany and France admitted each other to the benefit of the most favored nation clause. Now, much as France has gained by this clause, the fact that it was inserted, at the demand of Prince Bismarck, in the treaty which followed our defeat was enough to ensure its being looked upon as ruinous and disgraceful. Many people absolutely forgot that the concession was mutual, and regarded it as nothing but a heavy burden laid upon France. For the rest, it is true that when Germany adopted protection, it became difficult for France, in the face of this clause, to retain the system involved in her treaties of commerce. Another blow was levelled at our free trade by the coolness with Italy. Italy had her chief commercial outlet in France. This was enough. The idea of erecting a barrier of tariffs at the frontier sprang up at once; and angry patriots did not trouble themselves to consider whether there was no danger in driving Italy to seek her commercial alliances with those nations with whom she was already politically allied. Italy, meanwhile, was imprudent enough to go even further than Frenchmen wished; and she was the first to denounce the treaties of commerce and of navigation. From that time it became inevitable that we should abandon the idea of renewing our commercial ties with a country which was not only the ally of our enemies, but which, as its prosperity increased, was certain to devote its riches to military preparations which would threaten us. And finally, in a general way, the somewhat narrow national sentiment which the events of 1870 had produced in the minds of many Frenchmen found a sort of satisfaction in building up a barrier between France and other nations, and thinking that France could

suffice for herself, and need be dependent upon no one.

Thus a very strong protectionist current has set in; and, as the protectionists are recruited from among all shades of politicians, their consolidation into a party has disorganized the forces of the Opposition. They could not afford to delay by ministerial crises the discussion of the customs question, since the whole thing was bound to be definitely settled before 1892. The Republican protectionists could hardly dispense with the alliance of the Right, which was essential to their carrying their point; and the protectionists of the Right could hardly carry on a very active opposition campaign against the very men with whom they were working in harmony every day on the economic question, and the ministry which was going to carry their views into effect. The Cabinet, although most of its members incline to free trade opinions, has very wisely made up its mind to accept in principle the renunciation of the commercial treaties for the time being, and the raising of the tariff, and at the same time to modify as far as possible the extreme views represented on the Customs Commission under the presidency of M. Méline. They have thus been able to save the silk, wine, and distilled liquors industries from measures which would have hampered them severely. In the Chamber they have carefully avoided enunciations of principle which might fetter the future, and have succeeded in reserving to the government the right of negotiating commercial agreements even outside the limits of the tariffs voted by Parliament. They have made it the interest of all sections of the Chamber to support the ministry — the protectionists, because it accepts their principle on the whole, and the free traders, because it is evidently desirous to save all that can be saved of the free trade system. It is easy to criticise this economic opportunism; and some very good authorities are of opinion that, even with the modifications that have been introduced, the maximum and minimum tariffs passed by the Chamber, and about to be passed by the Senate, will in a little while so increase the cost of living — as well in the matter of food-stuffs as of manufactured articles — that an economic crisis must sooner or later supervene, which will assuredly find its reflection in a political crisis. The future will show whether these apprehensions are well founded, and I am, for my part, disposed to think that they are; but it is nevertheless evident that for the

present M. de Freycinet has found in the customs question a very solid buttress of his ministry.

It is the same, in some respects, with the labor question. The gusts of Socialism which have of late years been blowing all over Europe, and which have become more violent since Leo XIII. and William II. lent an ear to the workmen's claims and gave them the support of their high moral or political authority, have had their effect, to begin with, in blurring all the old party outlines. Setting aside the real passion of sympathy for the miseries of the poor which has taken possession of so many hearts in this *fin de siècle*, when gentle souls are led to seek in fellow-suffering with the sick and lowly that food of the affections which religion offers less abundantly than it used to do, all parties alike have recognized in the social question the widest, freest, most available platform for electoral purposes. Catholics and Radicals, Liberals and obstinate Conservatives are all rivalling each other in their solicitude for the well-being of the masses. In time past the Conservative was distinguished above all things by his attachment to the existing social order. You can hardly find a Conservative of that type now. Yet, at the same time, no one can deceive himself as to the danger to the existing order from the development of Socialism, and men turn, some to the State and some to the Church, to entreat them to curb as far as they can, by satisfying as far as they must, the importunities of the laboring classes. The present ministry has thoroughly grasped the situation; and it has won the confidence of the middle classes by steadily confronting all attempts at violence on the part of the working classes, and the confidence of the working classes, by resolutely taking in hand the solution of a certain number of the problems which affect labor.

The labor question in France is at once graver and less grave than it is in the neighboring countries. It is graver on account of the excitable and undisciplined French temperament, easily stirred up to violence and to attempts at revolution. It is less grave, because in France the workmen are nothing like so well organized as in England or Germany. They are not brigaded and financed like the English trade unions; they are not a political force like the German Socialists. They are a confused crowd of hostile sects, and their Socialistic fervor wastes itself in barren discussions and mere chatter. The truth is that the sufferings of

the workmen are not so very great. The miners, who everywhere else form the chief part of the Socialistic strength, are much better off in France than in the neighboring countries; and in Paris, the heart and home of French Socialism, almost all the industry that exists is an *industrie de luxe*, by which the workman gains a good living, and leads a far more easy and agreeable life than the majority of small clerks. Nevertheless, the Socialist movement has lately been growing in force and orderliness. The Possibilists, who wish to gain everything by legal means, tend more and more to absorb all other Socialist sects. Thanks to the excellent act for the regulation of syndicates and associations (answering more or less nearly to the English trade unions), the number of syndicates — including the men's syndicates, the masters' syndicates, and the mixed syndicates of masters and men — has risen in the last five years from five hundred to over three thousand. Strikes have been frequent, and in nearly all cases the men have obtained a great part of what they asked. The extraordinary success of some of these — such as that of the omnibus men — has led to others far more serious and less justifiable, as, for instance, the navvies' strike, which indeed came to a piteous end. Finally, the May-day demonstration of this year was marked by a seriousness and unanimity which gave it a character of unmistakable reality. It was on this occasion that the government displayed its resolution to allow no disturbances. Throughout the whole country M. Constans had taken his measures beforehand, and both the police and the military were in readiness to prevent the demonstration from degenerating into a riot. Order was maintained everywhere, except in one village in the north, that of Fourmies, where a strike had been got up, quite without justification, by Socialist agitators from outside. The soldiers on guard at the *mairie*, worried hour after hour by the stones and insults of the mob, lost patience at last, and a single discharge of their Lebel guns brought down a number of killed and wounded, among whom, alas! were many young girls, whom the rioters, with prudent forethought, had placed in the front rank. This ugly incident called forth a torrent of indignation at the moment among the laboring classes; but the firmness with which M. Constans accepted the responsibility of his own measures, and left it to the agitators who had got up the strike to take the responsibility of theirs, soon put

an end to the attempt of the Socialist deputies to bring upon him the censure of Parliament.

While showing itself thus resolute in the maintenance of public order, the ministry must share with Parliament the credit of a series of protective measures on behalf of the working classes. One day in the week has been regularly devoted by the Chamber to the consideration of questions of this kind, and if during these debates much time has been wasted in useless talk, and some measures agreed on which are neither just nor practicable — like that which forbids masters to refuse the services of union men — it is also true that much good work has been done, especially in the way of legislation restricting the labor of women and children. There is even a disposition to limit the labor of men, as in Switzerland; but the Chamber naturally hesitates to adopt sweeping measures which might seriously fetter the industry of the future. The responsibility of the employer in case of accidents to workmen has been defined by law. M. Develle has given notice of a bill for organizing an Agricultural Bank. Finally, M. Constanst, who will never be left behind in the race for popularity, is bringing in a bill on retiring pensions for aged workmen, which involves the gravest difficulties. In imitation of the system set on foot in Germany by Prince Bismarck, he proposes a system of insurance founded on a triple deposit, to be paid by the workmen out of their wages, by the masters, and by the State. But whilst in Germany the insurance is obligatory, in France it is to be permissive. Instead of pensions of three hundred and fifty francs, the bill offers pensions of six hundred francs, and, finally, it refuses the benefits of the pension to those who already possess an income of six hundred francs. The gravest objections have been made to this bill. It means saddling the State — or running the risk of saddling it — with an annual expenditure of a hundred millions. It means, in the course of a few years, the tying up of a sum of fifteen milliards; and how, it may be asked, is this sum to be employed without causing serious economic perturbations? And, further, by refusing the benefit to those who have savings of their own, it discourages personal effort and thrift, and renders the whole of the working classes dependent on the State. The enemies of M. Constanst say that it is not so long since he was noted for his absolute indifference to social questions, that he had a sceptical

smile for those who talked of the sufferings of the poor and of measures of public relief, and that he never took up social questions till he found they were the fashion and offered an easy road to popularity. They say he knows beforehand that his bill is impossible, and that he only brings it in to curry favor with the working voter.

Be that as it may, the Freycinet ministry, which might have been thought to be somewhat shaken last July, has been able to meet the Chambers at the re-opening of Parliament compact and strong. Those skirmishes amongst themselves on the part of its members which seemed at one time to threaten the existence of the Cabinet appear now to be things of the past. All the ministers in their various speeches — M. Constanst at Rodez and Toulouse, M. de Freycinet at the autumn manoeuvres, M. Ribot at Bapaume, M. Bourgeois at Besançon, and M. Rouvier at Nice, use the same language, speak of peace without and union within our borders, and pay each other compliments which we must believe to be sincere, since they are dictated by a common interest. It is everybody's interest not to endanger the ministry till the new tariffs have been passed by the Senate, till the debates on the Agricultural Bank and the Workmen's Pension Bill have been taken, and till the understanding with Russia has assumed a definite shape. The Freycinet Cabinet enters on the new session more united, more respected, and more powerful than before the long vacation. Whether it will use these advantages in such a way as to ensure a majority solid enough to carry it through the present Parliament is quite another question. Ministries and majorities alike suffer with us from the heterogeneous material of which they are composed, and from the want of great leading ideas and clear political principles to give them common objects and a bond of union. What man is there clear-sighted enough to tell us exactly what are the views of M. de Freycinet, M. Constanst, or even of M. Ribot or M. Bourgeois, on home or foreign policy? They are Liberals, they are Republicans, they desire the good of the country, they are admirable speakers — but, after all, what is their programme? They have secured a Russian alliance; but is it quite certain they intended to do so? They have carried a certain amount of Socialistic legislation; are they, therefore, Socialists? They have substituted a general tariff for treaties of commerce; does that prove that they are not at heart free trad-

ers? Their policy is the purest opportunism. They try to satisfy, as best they may, the demands of the majority, and to avoid all extremes. In the same way, the deputies, on their part, represent not their own opinions, but the general tendencies of the electorate, expressed in a modified form. In this general absence of principles everything depends upon persons, and as there is no political personality powerful enough to command the Republican majority, no minister is sure of the morrow; and everybody knows that the minister of to-morrow, whoever he is, will do much the same as the minister of yesterday. Our government is, in fact, an anonymous government, the resultant of the public common sense; and really, with the exception of the one irreparable fault of the abandonment of Egypt, this anonymous government has not done so badly — no, not in any department, military, diplomatic, colonial, or educational. If the present ministry has lasted longer than the rest, and may last longer still, it is not so much because it is better than they were, or because Parliament is more happily constituted, as because public opinion is simply weary of change and disposed to go on without it as long as possible.

The government, moreover, has just had a last bit of good luck in the disappearance of a man who was at one time a real danger to the republic, and who has given his name to a debased and vulgar form of democratic Cæsarism — General Boulanger. General Boulanger has executed justice on himself. His last act of despair, committed on the tomb of a woman who had sacrificed for him her honor and her fortune, did him little credit as a man of feeling, since he left behind him a sick and aged mother whose only support he was, or as a man of sense, since he professed still to be the leader of a party and the embodiment of a political idea. It brings out in strong relief the real insignificance of that extraordinary personage — that Napoleon *fin de siècle*, without genius and without success — that bubble hero, blown by the puffs of the press and the *café* concerts and by the caprice of the popular imagination. One cannot even give him the sympathy so easily accorded to those who die for love. It is hardly likely that a man of fifty-three, accustomed all his life to the most frivolous and vulgar gallantries, should shoot himself for no other cause than the death of a lady, however charming. It was not only Mme. de Bonnemain that he had lost; he had lost everything; all he had lived for for the

last six years — fame, clamor, popularity, wealth, luxury; all that made life gay and brilliant. All he had left was a handful of discredited and ridiculous partisans, incapable of restoring the irrecoverable splendors of the past. He shot himself like the gamester who has played his last stake. Besides, he had to do a theatrical thing; it was second nature with him. For years his name had been day by day in all the newspapers; all France — almost all Europe — had resounded with it; then suddenly it was night, and silence, and solitude all about him, and he felt himself sinking slowly into utter oblivion. He could not bear it. He had even lost the last companion who could keep up the illusion that he could still be loved and believed in. It seemed a necessity to him once more to attract a little attention — once more, for one last week, to be in all the newspapers. He arranged a melodramatic finish; it was like the fifth act of a fourth-rate play. He would have been quite satisfied if he could have seen the result; there was a great crowd at the funeral.

For the moment, his death has been a great relief to the Republican party. It puts the extinguisher, once for all, on a group of incorrigible agitators, on those very "patriots" against whom, but a few weeks ago, M. Constans had to hold the Place de l'Opéra. If Boulanger had lived, he might, in some time of internal trouble or foreign war, have again become a danger. But, on the other hand, his effacement may have its inconveniences. It removes the wholesome restraint which the fear of Boulangism has long exercised over the Radical Republicans; and it may facilitate the formation of a powerful party of the Extreme Left.

For Boulangism, if it was in itself a danger to the republic, was also extremely useful to it. It disorganized the old parties, and, in particular, it struck a mortal blow at the Monarchists by allying itself with them. It forced the Moderates and the Radicals to forget their differences and combine to support an anti-Boulangist ministry; and it drove into the arms of the Republic those Conservatives who could not endure the disgrace of the Boulangist alliance.

Finally, it would be unjust to forget that in the speeches he delivered as minister of war General Boulanger addressed the army and the nation in a manly and intrepid tone which doubtless contributed not a little to revive in France the sentiment of the national dignity. The army

has profited in every way by the general's popularity. And after all, with all the harm it has done, the detestable electioneering habits it has introduced by its shameless use of money and of every sort of puffing, and the ridicule it has all but brought on patriotism itself by the absurdity of its catch-vote songs and speeches and publications, it must be admitted that this strange episode of Boulangism, at once so tragic and so comic an interlude in our political life, after bringing the Republic to the very brink of destruction, has in the long run both taught it wisdom and given it strength.

The lesson has been a severe one. May it never have to be repeated!

From The Sunday Magazine.
PRIS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MISS TOOSEY'S MISSION," "ZOE," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

PRIS was only fourteen when her mother died, and she was suddenly called upon to take the head of the household, to clean and cook, and wash and market, and send off the children to school, and take care of baby and make the boys mind. She was nothing more than a child herself up to the day when all this devolved upon her, being childish for her age, and not one of those premature little women who become their mothers' right hand as soon as they are out of their cradles, and prefer school to holidays, and their sewing or a book to a game. Why, the very day her mother died Pris was out with her skipping-rope. She went to fetch the medicine, and thought it would take less time to go to the surgery skipping than it would walking or running.

But a week later she used that skipping-rope to mend the clothes-line without taking a single turn with it, though there was no one to see.

"I suppose," the neighbors said to her father, "as you'll get some one to come and do for you and the children. Ain't there none of your own folks as could come and bide a bit?"

But Blake shook his head despondently. He was a meek-spirited man, rather deaf, who had always been ruled by his wife, and had never had to decide anything for himself since she settled which arm he was to give her as they came out of church after their wedding.

"Ask your mother," or "Ask the mis-

sus," was always his answer when any question was put to him; and, even now that she was under the turf in the churchyard, he could hardly keep the words off his lips, so habitual had they become.

But he did not somehow at first like being ruled by other people, and he did not, strange to say, marry again, as every one said he would and should for the sake of the children. The neighbors gave him much advice on the subject, and even suggested suitable people: "A decent widder-woman as I knows, as kep' her first husband's house like a new pin," or "Mary Anne, as lives cook at parson's, and have a tidy bit of money put by in savings bank."

Perhaps Blake might have followed their advice if it had not been for Pris; but she having once laid down her skipping-rope, and twisted her very curly hair into as tidy a knob at the back of her head as its nature would permit, and having pinned on one of mother's aprons, whose length she hoped would make up for the shortness of the skirts underneath, and taken up the reins of government, had no notion of giving them up again and relapsing into pinafores and submission to a step-mother, whose rule, tradition says, is often not very agreeable.

But when sufficient time had elapsed to make it decent for Blake to think of replacing his wife, when Mary Anne at parson's began to show interest in the condition of the widower's knitted stockings, and called in Tom and Harry on their way from school to give them a bit of cake, and when the suitable "widder-woman" dropped in several times, and went away loudly lamenting the state the cottage was kept in, and the holes in the badly washed shirt that fluttered from the skipping-rope line in the garden — by this time, I say, Blake had got into the way of saying, "Ask Pris," when referred to; and I think even if Mary Anne or the "widder-woman" had got him as far as the altar-rails, and the parson had asked him, "Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife?" he would have answered, "Ask Pris;" and I am sure what Pris's answer would have been.

I dare say it would have been better for Pris and all of them to have had some one to take care of them. It certainly would have been far more comfortable, for the widder-woman was quite right in her criticisms on the state of the cottage; and even to bring it to that state of imperfection Pris had to toil early and late, and used to creep to bed at night with very

aching limbs and weary head, and yet with the unsatisfactory feeling that she had not done half she intended, and had done badly what she had accomplished.

She made all sorts of mistakes—boiled the family flannels, which were not too large to begin with, and could not afford to be reduced to about half their size; she scorched and burned shirts and frocks, not to speak of her own fingers and cheeks; she ran out of bread some days and took too much on others; she spent half washing-day trying to light the copper with green wood; she patched Tom's trousers one Saturday night by candlelight, and found next morning that those blue garments had been mended with vivid green, and Tom, though he was only twelve and too young to be a dandy, refused to go to Sunday-school or church because the chaps would make game of him.

Making the boys' mind was the hardest part of Pris's duties. She could make Harry and Jimmy mind pretty well by main force—they were to be reduced to tears by thumping; but Tom was too near her own size, and thumped back, and had a sudden way of turning upside down and kicking, which was difficult to cope with. He was not to be coaxed either, or bribed with such things as a sprinkling of sugar on his bread and butter or a scrap of dripping with his potatoes. When he was more than usually "owdacious," he helped himself from the sugar basin or dripping jar, and when he was better behaved, pretended that he did not care for either of those delicacies.

The girls were better. Polly, who came next to Tom, was the same sort of gentle nature as her father, and Annie and Baby, the two youngest, regarded Pris as a grown-up person, and accordingly thought that all she said must be right, and that her decisions on such matters as going to bed or having more bread and butter were final, and could not be appealed against. Besides, as Pris said, Annie and Baby were always good. To which Tom would retort, "Good reason why, because they always gets their own way."

"So would you, if you was like them."

But my story begins six years after the time of Mrs. Blake's death, and Pris is twenty, and Baby will be seven next birthday, and will be passed out of the infant school at the next examination, and protests against the pet name of Baby, that still clings to her, and prefers to be called Lucy, if not the whole dignity of her three names, Lucy Matilda Alice.

Six years' experience has made quite a

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good manager of Pris, and given her a certain staid manner which girls with mothers do not get so easily. It is wonderful how the care of a house interferes with a bit of fun. Pris could not do this because she had to see to father's dinner, and she could not do that because it was washing-day. She could not stop late for something because the children must go to bed, and she could not go off early somewhere else because she had to start them to school.

She never had any money to spend on her own adornment, and there was no mother to say, "Pris, you ain't had a new hat this ever so long, and your old ain't really fit to be seen, so Harry's trousers can wait, if we puts a patch on 'em, and you just go off and choose one somat like Lizzie West's."

So Pris Blake, the village girls said, was not fit to be seen, "as did ought to be ashamed of making such a guy of herself," and the money went into that constant drain on the resources—boots. It really was a serious problem how to keep eight pairs of feet in boots, and three pairs of them boys' feet, kicking and rubbing and scraping, never still for a minute, till Pris wished with all her heart that boys could go to the blacksmith's along with the horses and be shod with iron.

But though the girls criticised Pris's hat and the shabby jacket which had added a tinge of green in the course of years to its dingy black, and the velvet collar of which had lost all its nap, the young men and lads agreed that the face under the shabby hat was a very pretty one, and the figure, in spite of the old jacket and ill-fitting dress, very trim and neat, and that, in spite of a certain staid, motherly way with her, and always being too busy for a bit of fun, Pris was a good sort, and no humbug about her. And there was one of them who maintained that there was not another girl like her in Whistley, nor, for the matter of that, for miles round, nor in Medington, nor, as he'd heard tell, in London; and, if any one ventured to express a doubt on the subject, Will Wiseman was ready to fight him; which seemed a curious way of proving the superiority of a girl.

But Will Wiseman was a wild, hot-headed young fellow, and his arguments were very apt to be impressed on his opponent with his fists if milder means failed to persuade him. He was half-a-gipsy, and lived with a very disreputable old grandfather in a tumble-down cottage just on the edge of Whistley heath.

Tom had attached himself to Will, the attraction being, I am afraid, Will's skill in rabbitting; for he was a first-rate hand at setting a wire, and knew all the haunts of the rabbits and their ways and tastes as well as if he had been a rabbit himself. He had a half-bred, wire-haired terrier, Jock, who was as clever a poacher as could be found, but who had the most deceptively innocent appearance on ordinary occasions, and dodged along the road past the gamekeeper, or the owner of the coverts, as if he would not have known game either by scent or sight, any more, I was going to say, than an old woman's cat; but that is a very bad simile, as that tabby nose and chinks of expressionless eyes are as keen after game as the most sporting dog in the land.

Will had always been a regular pickle of a boy, and Pris regarded the friendship between him and Tom with serious disapproval, for any piece of mischief in the village or neighborhood was always set down to Will Wiseman, and generally with justice, and to be chums with Will meant implication in constant hot water. She had not a good word for him; it was always "Be off!" "Tom ain't a-coming." "Tain't no use your bothering about." She set to once and washed down the bricks with much swilling of water and flourishing of a mop, because he would stand about at the gate, and she could not otherwise get rid of him.

But she stood up for him once when he was falsely accused of having taken some apples from Farmer Lloyd's orchard, even though it got Tom into trouble. She knew that that Sunday morning when the apples were taken Will and Tom were after the rabbits somewhere about in Squire Lupton's park. She had heard Will's whistle in the road just as she started the children for the Sunday-school, and Tom, who was fastening his bootlace, and prepared to go off in an unusually lamb-like condition, heard it too, and his bootlace thereupon broke, and there was not another to be found anywhere, till it was too late for school, and when church time came Tom was nowhere to be found. And Pris had seen Will slouch past with that coat with capacious pockets, out of one of which peeped the twinkling pink nose of a ferret, and which could contain a goodly number of rabbits without any one suspecting it. And there was Jock at his heels, looking as innocent as the day, and enjoying a stroll with his master with no thought of anything beyond.

Pris saw them come back too, and saw

Tom take a look into those much-distended pockets, from which Will was evidently offering Tom a pick. But Tom shook his head and pointed over his shoulder with his thumb, and Pris guessed he was referring to her as the obstacle to his bringing home a nice plump rabbit for their dinner.

So when Farmer Lloyd came round in a tremendous rage about his apples, his choice Blenheim oranges, which had been cleared off the tree during church time, and declared Will was at the bottom of it, Pris was able to clear his character in this direction, and he was already too deeply in the black books of the keepers for any harm to be done by them.

Tom got a thrashing from his father, which though rare was severe when it did happen, and the keepers kept a suspicious eye on him for some time to come.

But from that day Will Wiseman cherished a feeling of gratitude towards Pris, for those apples might have meant six weeks' hard labor; and besides, Will had a peculiar code of honesty of his own which he did not consider transgressed by knocking over a couple of rabbits or so, or setting a cunning wire, or by taking a few apples just to eat himself; but to clear a tree of several bushels and cart them away for sale, he called thieving, and he would not have liked to be suspected of such an action.

His gratitude to Pris took inconvenient shapes, such as a present of a young squirrel, taken at the risk of his neck from the topmost branches of a fir-tree, and brought down scratching and wriggling and biting like a fury.

"As if," Pris said, "I hadn't enough creatures to look after already," meaning the children, "and as if Harry wasn't mischievous and tiresome enough for twenty squirrels."

He taught a blackbird with infinite pains to whistle a tune, and gave it to her in a clumsy cage of his own construction.

"As if," Pris said, "I had time to be messing about after it, and keeping the cat from eating it. And I was sick and tired of that stupid old tune before it was in the house a day."

But, besides this, he showed his gratitude in useful ways — unlimited clothes' pegs were provided; baskets, of strange shape it is true, but strong and useful, were left inside the gate, or tossed to one of the children as they passed; if he happened to be passing (and he did happen to pass pretty frequently) when Pris was struggling with the long pole by which

the bucket was lowered into the well to draw water, he was ready to draw as much as she wanted; and more than once, when she had sent one of the boys on an errand, Will had undertaken it, and left Harry and Jimmy free to pursue their game of marbles or otherwise amuse themselves.

But the best part of Will's gratitude was shown in his attention to Tom's morals. No more cutting school or church and indulging in rabbiting; no more whistling him off the path of duty to join the idle lads round the sign-post by the pond; no more tossing half-pence by the wall near the Cricketers; no more encouragement to overcome the qualms of deadly sickness occasioned by the little pipe, which, in the earlier days of their friendship, Will himself had given his youthful admirer — indeed, that little treasured clay pipe somehow found its way under Will's heel, perhaps by accident, one day when Tom had been describing, as an excellent joke, how Pris had blown him up on account of it.

"Will ain't near such a jolly chap as he was," Tom complained. "He dropped on me like anything to-day because I said something as he and the other chaps says every day of their lives. One ain't a gal to be so mighty particular and mealy-mouthed."

CHAPTER II.

IT was when the children had the diphtheria that Pris grew to recognize the value of Will Wiseman. No one else would come near the cottage. Mary was out in service then, "and a good thing too," Pris said, "as she were out of the way;" though often and often she would have been glad of her help and of some one to pour out her hopes and fears to, more fears than hopes generally, for the children were undoubtedly very ill, and Pris, knowing little of illness, often thought them worse than they were.

Father was a good deal deafier than when mother died, and he could not hear the thick breathing that made Pris so terribly anxious. It took so long to shout anything into his ear so as to reach his understanding — which, perhaps, was a little deaf too — that by the time she had repeated what she had to say half-a-dozen times, in an ever louder and louder tone, Pris had often changed her own mind in the matter, and what had begun with "Don't Annie look bad?" turned ultimately into, "Don't Annie look better?" or *vice versa*. And as his answer was equally slow in coming, her opinion might have veered round to

its original starting point, before he said, "Ay, that she do! mortal bad!" or "To be sure! a sight better."

There was a regular scare in the village about diphtheria. Two children died of it with terrible suddenness; they were at school and playing about in the road one day and dead the next. It was the first time anything of the sort had been known in the place; children had died of scarlet fever, croup, fits over teething, and, once in a way, from accident, but this was something fresh and mysterious. They could not even pronounce the name, much less spell it. The mothers, and for the matter of that the men, too, got into a helpless state of panic, and could do nothing but watch the children and wonder whose turn might come next; and it was curious to notice that the usually most careless mothers were now the most anxious. The greatest credulity prevailed as to what was likely to cure the disease or prevent it, and in almost every case where the doctor was called in, he found some curious pointment or nauseous brew, happily as harmless as it was disgusting, which the parents had been using as an infallible cure; and I should think half the children wore little cotton bags tied round their necks under their clothes, containing something in the nature of a charm procured from an old woman reputed to possess supernatural powers.

The more sensible mothers were a little bit ashamed of these cotton bags, and treated them merely as a joke, saying, "Well, if they don't do no good, they can't do no harm;" and as, besides the charm, the bags contained a lump of camphor, they may have been right. But in spite of these bags the illness spread among the children and the panic increased. When the Blake children took it every one in the place was either taken up with nursing their own sick or mourning their dead, or in too great mortal dread of catching the complaint or of carrying it to their families to go near Pris.

The four younger children all had it, and Annie so badly that no one thought she would ever recover. Mary, as I have said, was out of the way, being in service, and Tom, who was working at Lea Farm, looking after the farmer's nag, was found a bed up at the farm when the illness began, so that he should not go backwards and forwards.

So Pris was left very much to herself and had a hard time of it with all the four ill together and no one even to send on a message or lend a helping hand; at least

there would have been no one, if Will had not come to the fore.

I expect Pris's nursing would have shocked experts in that line, and even Dr. Pattison, who had a high opinion of Pris, shook his head over the untidiness and apparent discomfort that prevailed; but, after all, the children all got well, and that is, I suppose, the main object of nursing.

But Will was worth his weight in gold just then; he was not a bit afraid of the infection; indeed, that very first day, when Pris was pretty well at her wits' end how to send for the medicine, and Annie was crying and would not let her go out of sight for a minute, she heard some one come stumping into the kitchen and straight through, up the stairs to the bedroom, as if he had known the house all his life, instead of never having been asked inside the door before.

"Hullo!" he said, "ain't there somat as I can do? How's the kids?"

And off he went for the medicine, and was back in no time, and swept up the kitchen, and made up the fire, and filled the kettle, and was handy to help with Harry, who objected strongly to having his throat painted, and kicked and fought to prevent its being done, but who was reduced to submission, and even to cheerful submission, by the grasp of Will's strong hand and by his, "Hold up, old chap. Here's a lark! Where's that mouth of yours? Why Jock can open his a deal wider! That ain't a mouth for a man of your size!"

After this Will was installed as throat painter, and even Baby preferred to be done by his great clumsy hands, and made a little fuss when Pris undertook it.

It would be hard to say what Will did not put his hand to during that time of emergency. He even had a turn at the washtub more than once, and rubbed away at the sheet, which required respectful treatment on account of age, with almost too much energy; he swept and scrubbed, and peeled potatoes, and made tea, and prepared beef-tea after a certain rough-and-ready receipt of Pris's.

One morning, when Annie was at the worst, Pris found out quite accidentally that he had not gone home at all during the night, but had slept in the wood-house, though he denied it with might and main, as he thought she might be vexed at his hanging about the place all night; but the following evening she brought down a blanket and bid him stop if he had a mind by the fire, as, though it was March, the nights were still cold and frosty.

It was a great comfort to her having him there, for in the deadly silence of the night, when you are the only one awake in the house, and are such an inexperienced nurse as poor Pris, all sorts of horrors come crowding on the anxious mind, and what may be really only peaceful sleep takes the grimmer form of death, and strange noises and ghostly movements make the familiar room full of nameless terrors.

On more than one occasion, when she could endure the nervous strain no longer, she had roused her father from his peaceful, snoring slumbers; but this was a difficult process, and by the time he was fully awake all the children were awake too, and she wished with all her heart that the silence, terrifying as it was, could be restored.

The mere consciousness that Will was down-stairs had a wonderfully reassuring effect on her, so much so, that when Annie was quiet and sleeping for a bit, Pris also dropped asleep, with her head on the child's pillow, and when she woke found that Jimmy, who was in the outside room with father, had been awake and asking for drink, and had been supplied by Will, whose sleep down below must certainly have been of the lightest to be broken by the boy's weak voice, which had not reached Pris in the next room. And when the cold, grey dawn began to steal in, making the sleeping faces look more ghastly and the candle, flickering in the socket, dull and dingy; and when, as often happens just at dawn, a wretched feeling of cold and shivering overwhelmed her, and heart and hope seemed to fail her, it was very cheering to go down and find a nice little bit of bright fire and the kettle on, and Will making a cup of tea for her, and to sit a bit talking in low tones of the events of the night, and to have her fears combated and a hopeful view taken of symptoms which would have appeared very black if she had been by herself.

Sometimes, in years to come, when Pris looked back on this time, which was not very often, for she was too busy as a rule, and perhaps too matter-of-fact and sensible, to waste time in looking back or looking forward, it seemed to her that, in spite of the care and wearing anxieties, these days were rather pleasant. The service of love is a very pleasant service, both to the one who gives and to the one who takes; the humblest service done out of love, even human love, becomes "fine" and noble, though it may be only filling a kettle or peeling potatoes.

Pris did not a bit realize what made Will's services so gratifying, except that he did them so willingly, without even being asked to do so, instead of requiring to be hunted up and reminded and scolded and thumped into the performance of them as her brothers did.

Neither perhaps did Will understand why he did all manner of things for Pris, which he would not have dreamt of doing for the old woman who "did" for his grandfather, and who said, "That of all the idlest, disobligingest, sauciest lads, Will Wiseman were the worst."

Every one was too much taken up with their own affairs just then to have time to talk about their neighbors, but, as soon as the epidemic abated and the first panic was over, you may be sure the people made up for lost time in picking one another's characters to pieces, and the idea of "that low, drinking, swearing, good-for-nothing fellow, Will Wiseman," being always about at Blake's gave them something to talk about.

You would naturally fancy that a motherless girl would be tenderly treated, especially by mothers with girls of their own, but this I am afraid is not the case, and the hardest pecks are, as a rule, administered to such unprotected chicks by the fussy, clucking hens who most carefully gather their own families under their capacious wings.

"And Mrs. Jones do say as how Will ain't been home this week or more!"

"And Blake that deaf as he don't know half as goes on under his very nose!"

"And Pris Blake that impudent as she won't take a word from no one, though it's for her own good!"

I dare say it was well meant, or partly well meant, and that as mothers they knew that it was not safe to allow such a certainly doubtful character as Will Wiseman to be on such easy terms with a girl, and, of course, if Mrs. Blake had been alive she would not have allowed it; so we will do the village gossips the credit of believing that they did mothers' parts in warning Blake of what was going on. This warning must have been given in stentorian tones as Blake was deafer than usual just then with a cold, so any whispers or gentle words of caution were quite thrown away on him, and it was difficult to convey what you meant without the subject becoming known to every man, woman, and child within half a mile.

I do not know who undertook to inform him, but I think it was a certain Mrs. East, judging from a tightening of Pris's

lips whenever that good old lady's name was mentioned, and I certainly think it was done by a woman, as I doubt the courage of the men.

But Blake came home one evening very angry. He was a placid sort of man, but when he was once roused he was worse than his more peppery neighbors, as the boys knew from the severity of the very occasional thrashings he gave them. And then, as ill-luck would have it, when he opened the gate there was Will Wiseman, as if the place belonged to him, carrying Baby, who, though five years old, was little better than her name through weakness — carrying her up and down in the sun, which was warm that evening on the path under the hedge.

Blake flung down his basket and hoe, and took the child out of Will's arms and bade him "Be off! and not come about the place again."

Will turned and stared at him in surprise, and Baby, spoilt and fretful through illness, burst out into a roar, and struggled and wriggled to get away from her father into Will's arms, and Pris came out to see what was the matter.

"Get along into the house!" Blake said. "I'll not have you the talk of the place." And he gave her a push, rougher perhaps than he intended, or else it was the surprise that made her stagger back against the porch as if she would have fallen.

She gave a quick look up at her father's face as if she thought he might have been drinking, though he was not given to excess, and then at Will, whose face looked very dark and lowering, and whose hand had clenched in a menacing way when Blake pushed her away.

Then she turned white to the lips, and, taking Baby in her arms, went into the cottage, soothing the sobbing child in an odd mechanical way that frightened her more than her father's violence. When Blake came in a minute afterwards she listened perfectly silently to what he said till he had done, and then she put her lips close to his ear, and said, "Will Wiseman ain't nothing to me. It's a lie!"

He heard it, though it was not half as loud as the yells most people addressed him with, and Will heard it too, though he was standing on the other side of the road, knocking at his boot with his stick as was his way when in uncertainty.

"If it's a lie just send him about his business, and adone with un."

And Pris got up without another word, and went out to the gate with flaming

cheeks and angry eyes. She was angry with all the world, with the neighbors most of all for their spiteful gossiping, with her father for listening to and believing tales against her, with herself for having given any cause for such talk, and with Will because his name was coupled with hers; she was angry even with Baby's doll that lay in the path, and she kicked it quite viciously out of the way, and with a branch of the rose-tree by the path, which caught her dress as she passed, and she jerked away, tearing a long rent in her dress as she did so. She forgot the gratitude she really felt for all Will had done while the children were ill, and she had hardly realized yet the feeling, deeper than gratitude, that was growing in her heart for Will Wiseman, and so she spoke hard, bitter words to him, words that stung and words that cut.

"Folks is making themselves busy about you and me, Will Wiseman; pity they ain't something better to do. And I've been telling father as there ain't nothing between you and me, nor it ain't likely as there ever would be; and if there weren't another man in the world, I'd never alooked at you, and so you'd best be off, and I don't care if I never sets eyes on you again!"

And more she said of the same sort, and he listened silently, still knocking at his boot with his stick, and with that half-smile on his face which, even in the midst of her anger, reminded her of nights when he had coaxed Baby to take her medicine, or Annie to swallow a drop of milk with a patience that had not been worn out by their fretful perverseness. And then he turned without a word, and with Jock with drooping ears and tail between his legs following at his heels, he went straight off to the Cricketers and got drunk.

CHAPTER III.

TOM was always rather a care and anxiety to Pris. He had been too near her age when their mother died to yield to her authority as the others did. He remembered too distinctly the games they had had together, and the mischief into which, in old days, Pris had been the first to go. He recollects playing truant with her from school, and passing a lovely day nutting in the woods, and enduring the punishment that ensued in company, consoling one another as best they could by planning further mischief. So she never got him satisfactorily under her thumb, and when he was away at the time of the children's illness, he got very independent

and mannish, and came back with a pipe in his mouth as bold as anything, and dared her to lay her hands on it at her peril. He pretended that he wanted shaving, and scraped away at his smooth young cheeks with father's blunt old razor till Pris did not know whether to laugh or be angry.

He grew dandified in his dress, too, about this period, and invested in a pot of strong-smelling pomade, with which he plastered his hair on Sunday, and he bothered Pris's life out over his collars, which he wanted stiffer than her economy over starch would allow. She did not understand what these symptoms meant till she met him one Sunday afternoon walking with the dairymaid at the farm, a young woman considerably his senior and his superior both in height and breadth, both of them looking unspeakably sheepish and foolish.

I do not think Pris was quite wise in the open derision with which she treated Tom's youthful liking for Susan, but she had a sore little feeling in her own heart just then which found a certain relief in sharp words to others, and she could not help missing and wishing for Will Wiseman at every turn, though she was angry with herself, and crushed the feeling out of sight impatiently every time it made itself felt.

Will took her at her word and kept away; at least she never saw him about the place, though sometimes she found some water ready drawn on washing-days, or some sticks chopped, or her basket mended or replaced by a new one. She asked no questions, and pretended to herself that it was one of the children who did these things, though she knew all the time it was not; but, on the days when such things happened, life seemed brighter and pleasanter and easier, and she was not so ready to be down on Tom.

Anything she heard about Will was always unsatisfactory, the neighbors being careful to repeat anything to his discredit; and though Pris tossed her head and appeared quite indifferent on the subject, such bits of news rankled and stuck by her. Such, for instance, as, "That Wiseman he *were* making a noise at the Cricketers last night!" "Mrs. Jones do say as how he ain't been home not to say sober for this week and more." "Keepers is keeping a sharp lookout after Will Wiseman; they do say he've been out in the coverts ever so many nights, but he's so deep, there's no catching of him." "That Will might agot took on at Farmer Scott's,

if he hadn't abeen such a lazy, good-for-nothing chap. The farmer says as he's a capital hand to work when he's a mind to ; but there ! if he ain't a mind, nothing can't stir him."

Pris's eyes grew unaccountably dim as she darned the family stockings at night after hearing such tales, though she indignantly rubbed them clear as she told herself "It ain't nothing to me."

One day in the summer, when the children came in from school, they reported that the recruiting sergeant was down at the Cricketers.

"He do look smart, Pris. You did oughter aseen him. His cap were all aone side over his ear, and he'd a bunch of ribbons all sorts of colors on to it. And there were a lot of the chaps round him, and he were making game of the plough and minding the beasts, and saying as the Whistley chaps was too smart for that sort of stupid work, and had a deal better serve their queen and country, and see life, and have a bit of fun."

Annie had got it all pat, having listened with wide blue eyes and open mouth and simple, believing mind, while the sergeant uttered his usual clap-trap remarks to the assembled hobbledehoys, and she accepted it just as she did the vicar's teachings when he catechized the children on Sunday afternoons.

Even Baby was full of it, and lamented that she could not go as a drummer-boy, being old enough now to recognize the disabilities of her sex, though in younger days she had consulted Pris as to whether, if she was very good and learned to spell, she could some day grow up into a chorister boy.

"Harry says as he won't never go to plough, and he's put on his hat just like the soldier's, only it won't keep on, as there ain't no 'lastic.'

Pris listened without paying much attention to the children's chatter till she heard one of them mention Will Wiseman.

"Were he there?"

"Yes," said Baby, "he give me this whistle as I come by. He's most days outside the Cricketers when we comes home."

Baby said this in innocence, but the other children, even Annie, laughed, knowing what report said of Will, and Pris colored a dusky red, and bid the children rub the mud off their boots before they came to tea. But she got hold of Baby as they went out, on pretence of tying the strings of her pinafore, and whispered,—

"Will ain't got the ribbons in his hat, Baby, had he now ?"

"No, or he'd agiven me a bit for my dolly," was the reassuring answer.

But, all the same, Pris was restless and uneasy that evening, and kept recalling the time when the children were ill, and she had such ready help and sympathy from Will, and the poor thanks he got for it that wretched day when she had spoken so sharply and angrily.

Her father came in out of sorts with cold and rheumatism, and went to bed, as he often did now, as soon as he had had his supper, in the broad May daylight, and Tom was late in coming in ; so the others were all in bed before he appeared, and Pris was left to herself with the smoky little benzoline lamp and the work-basket heaped with mending.

Her thoughts did not often interfere with her fingers, but to-night they did, and she put down the big darn in the knee of Jimmy's stocking, and went out into the soft, balmy night, where the nightingales were singing and the air was fragrant with the sweet-briar bush by the gate. It was nine o'clock and very quiet, except that from the village, from time to time, she could hear shouts and noisy laughter and bits of songs, which she guessed came from the Cricketers. That was a song she knew Will Wiseman sang ; she remembered him whistling it when he was helping at the washtub, and she fancied, even at this distance, she could distinguish Will's voice in the noisy chorus that took up the tune directly it was started. Presently there was a fresh outburst of noise, as though some of the party were dispersing, and calls of good-night and shrill whistles, and then she heard voices coming up the road, and she drew back behind the hedge to avoid being seen, for the moon had come up behind the trees and shone full on the gate. It was two men who lived further along the road, and she heard them talking as they passed.

"He've set his heart on getting Will Wiseman, but Will's too sharp to be caught by his chaff. He knows what he's about, Will does ; but sergeant, he won't rest till Will's took the shilling, and he'd a deal rather have him than half-a-dozen of them young louts as'll come if he whistles to them."

This was encouraging so far. Will was safe and Pris was turning to go in when another step sounded in the road. It was Tom this time, but not quite Tom's usual step, and Pris's face clouded. Tom had kept pretty straight as regards drink.

Now and then at harvest-home or club days he had taken a drop too much, enough to make him heavy and stupid, but this was quite an exception, and when he was a bit late in coming in, Pris was much more inclined to think he was up to some silly nonsense with Susan than that he was at the public-house. But now there was no mistaking his lurching, unsteady step, and when he reached the gate, he fumbled with the familiar latch as if he did not know how to open it.

Pris had a great mind to go and rouse up her father to give Tom a warm reception, but the snores which resounded from above testified that his slumbers were deep, so Pris relinquished the idea and went forward herself with folded arms to meet the culprit.

"You did ought to be ashamed of yourself!" she began, and had plenty more reproaches to follow, though she might have known the uselessness of reproaching a tipsy man, but the first words died away on her lips and she ran forward and caught him by the arm, for, as he stumbled up the brick path towards her in the bright moonlight, she saw the bunch of ribbons in his cap.

Pris need not have been so broken-hearted over Tom's enlisting, nor need all the other mothers and sisters who cry their hearts out and fret themselves ill when their respective sons and brothers and sweethearts take the queen's shilling.

"I had rather follow him to his grave," I have heard mothers say, and indeed they talk of it as if it were worse than death. But, after all, it is often the very best thing a lad can do, and those very broken-hearted mothers and sisters and sweethearts are sometimes the first to recognize this, when the first bitterness is over and the idle, troublesome, mischievous lad comes back a well-drilled, disciplined soldier, with pluck and purpose put into his aimless, slipshod life.

But Pris, as many another before and since has done and will do, sat and cried as if Tom were given over to hopeless destruction both soul and body, and looked at the bunch of ribbons in his cap that had fallen on the floor with loathing; while Tom, after an attempt at blustering and a confused effort to repeat some of the convincing arguments of the sergeant, let his heavy head drop forwards on the table and fell asleep.

The door was still open and the moonlight came in, falling on the girl's head as she sat with her face buried in her hands, and on Tom's clumsy foot sprawling across

the threshold, and on the cap, from the ribbons of which it took all the gay coloring. Now and then the long, sad note of the nightingale sounded outside, and once a footstep passed along and Pris, in the depth of her grief, heard it and listened.

From the road the two figures inside the house could be distinctly seen, though the little lamp gave but a poor light, but Will Wiseman could see them well and presently he opened the gate and came to the door.

"Pris," he said, "I've adone all I knew to keep him off it but he wouldn't be kep'. I brought him out twice and started him home, but the other chaps thought 'twere a good bit of fun and set him agin me and said I'd no business to meddle with his concerns and he'd a right to do as he liked. I kep' sober apurpose I did, Pris. I ain't had half a pint so as to keep a eye on him, knowing how you'd be put about if he 'listed. I'd have given my right hand, that I would, to keep him off it, but they saw my game and they got me out of the way for a minute, and when I come back he'd gone and done it. Don'tee cry, Pris, don'tee now! I can't abear to see you!"

"Wouldn't they let him off, Will?" she sobbed, "he's such a lad, though he's well growed and thinks himself a man, he ain't much more of a man than Harry or Jemmy. He don't know his own mind a bit, and he's led as easy as Baby by any one as has the mind, and mother always thought a terrible deal of Tom. It would abroke her heart to think he'd 'listed, and she'd asaid 'twas because I hadn't made his home comfortable; and I know as how I've been sharp with him at times and given him the rough side of my tongue when he was tiresome over them collars. But I didn't mean nothing by it, and I don't think as I'll ever get over it if he goes off this way!"

Will stood listening silently. Pris felt a little hurt at what seemed like a want of sympathy after his first words which had been so kind and consoling. He stood leaning against the doorpost, black against the moonlight. What a big, fine-looking young fellow he was! no wonder the sergeant cast covetous eyes on him; close upon six feet in height and with broad shoulders and well-knit limbs, there was not another young fellow in Whistley to compare with him.

Presently he turned and went away without a word, hurt perhaps, Pris thought, by her want of gratitude again. After all,

he had done all he could to prevent it, and he had no call to do even that after the way she and father had treated him. But she was too miserable about Tom to think much about Will.

She tried to rouse Tom up from his heavy sleep and induce him to go to bed, but all the pushings and pullings would not wake him, beyond a sense that he was being bothered and a tendency to hit out at his persecutor, and she was just going to turn out the lamp and leave him and go up to bed, when quick footsteps sounded outside and Will Wiseman stood there again. He walked with a brisk, alert step, and he looked taller than when he stood there a few minutes before, for he was drawn up with his shoulders back as if he had had a touch of the drill that awaited poor slouching Tom sprawling there over the table, and his voice had a ring and a life in it that was new to its slow, Berkshire accent.

"Pris," he said, "it's all right. I've adone it. Tom ain't agoing. I'm to go instead. Only look here, it ain't regular nohow, this ain't, and it's only as the sergeant, he's been after me all day; he'd got a bet with t'other chap as he'd 'list me afore he'd done with me. I'm a bit taller than Tom there, you see, and stronger. And as luck would have it, none of the chaps was actually by when Tom done it. But we'll have to keep it dark, and when Tom wakes up he's not like to remember clear what he's been after, so if he talks about 'listing you'll tell him he's just mistook, and that he'd took too much and made a fool of himself, and the less as he says about it the better. Here, fetch them ribbons out of his cap and stick 'em in mine. Why, Pris, what's wrong now? What be crying for? 'Twere just for you as I've done it. It can't never be as you keer about *my* going away. Why, Pris, I thought as there wasn't no one would keer about my going away, and that as long as Tom bid at home 'twould make it all right. Why, Pris! Pris! Pris!"

Will Wiseman had enlisted just to keep Pris from crying; but now, so greatly do circumstances alter cases, he would have enlisted twenty times over to make her cry like that, for she was crying for him, and with her head on his shoulder.

CHAPTER IV.

So the recruiting sergeant won his bet and carried off Will Wiseman among the other raw hobbledehoys he took with him next morning to Aldershot, a very shambling, shame-faced crew, inwardly repen-

tant, and some of them with tears painfully near their eyes, a weakness which they felt was hardly consistent with their new character of brave defenders of their country. Only Will held up his head and stepped out with a boldness and spirit new to him, and at the turn of the road which led up to the Blakes' cottage he looked round and took off his cap with the gay ribbons in it and waved it to Pris, who stood at her gate, bare-armed from the washtub and holding poor Jock, who was howling and straining with all his might, with that desperate longing of his faithful heart to follow his master, a feeling which, perhaps, was not unshared by the very person who prevented him from going.

As for Tom, he spent that day in a maze. He woke up with a very tolerably clear recollection of what had happened the evening before, combined with a racking headache and an overwhelming repugnance to the military life, which had appeared so entrancing the day before. He shut his eyes and tried to go to sleep again and forget it, but there was no doing that, and a heavy groan told Pris he was awake and suffering in mind or body. She had not much pity for him, I am afraid, and thought he deserved a sharp punishment; so she left him alone a bit, and even smiled a little when a heart-rending groan or ejaculation of despair reached her; but presently she came to the foot of the stairs and called out: "Ain't you never going to get up? It's hard on seven, and you'll get the sack if you're late again."

"I ain't agoing to work," in a very doleful voice.

"Not going to work? and why not, I'd like to know? If you think you're going to bide at home and get drunk on father's earning, you'll find you're mighty mistook."

A groan. "Ain't you heard then? Don't you know?"

"I know as you come in last night the worse for drink, so as I'd a mind to shut the door on you and let you sleep where you might as weren't fit to be under a decent roof."

"Pris, I say, come here."

"Well, what is it?"

"Didn't you know as I'd 'listed? Oh, Lor!" Tom groaned, rolling his face down into the pillow. "How could I abeen such a fool?"

"'Listed? Go along with your rubbish! You didn't know what you was up to, as did ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"Look at my cap," he said. "You'll see fast enough as it ain't gammon; I only wish it was!"

"Well, here's your cap. What's the matter with it?"

Tom sat up in bed, staring with hot, inflamed eyes, and pushing his hands through his rough hair. "Ain't there the ribbons in it?" he said. "Could I adreamt all that?"

The kettle boiling over called Pris away, and presently Tom came slouching down, still with that puzzled, staring look in his face.

"I say, Pris, ain't I said nothing when I come in last night about having 'listed? I'm bothered if I can recollect how it was."

"You talked a deal of nonsense, and the less you says about it the better. I reckon you don't want to go soldiering this morning, anyhow, and you'd best go up to the farm and keep out of the way till the soldier chaps have cleared off, so as to have no more talk about it."

And so Tom did, though, as a rule, he was not given to following Pris's advice; but it was long before he lost that puzzled look, and no one ever told him that his memory had not played him as false as he believed, and that, but for Will Wiseman, he would have been enlisted fast and firm in her Majesty's line.

"I say, Pris Blake," called out one of the neighbors, passing the cottage that afternoon, as Pris was hanging out the clothes, "have you heard as that fine flame of yours, Will Wiseman, got tight last night at the Cricketers, and was 'listed when he didn't know what he was after?"

"No, I ain't heard it," said Pris. "And if I had I shouldn't believed it."

"Well then, it's true, for I see him go off with the sergeant and the other chaps this morning with my very own eyes."

"Who said he were tight?"

"Why, my Joe; he were there, and he see the fun."

"Was he took home in a wheelbarrow, your Joe? It wouldn't be the first time as I've heard tell."

The woman gave an offended toss of her head and prepared to move on, but invincible curiosity overcame the offence, and she came back.

"Folks had got it about that your Tom had took the shilling, but he weren't with the other chaps this morning. Why, if you ain't got that brute of a dog of Wiseman's! Bless the girl! whatever are you untying him for? I've heard as he bites cruel."

"So he do," said Pris calmly, going on undoing the rope that held him. "He's a terrible one to bite where he don't take a fancy, and I'm going to give him a bit of a run."

Which ended the conversation abruptly.

More than a year passed by since Will Wiseman went for a soldier, and I think most of the Whistley people had forgotten all about him, so slight a thing is memory except when it is made indelible by love, or perhaps by hate. It would be mortifying to most of us to know how short a time we should be missed if we were removed by any cause from the circle of which we seem so important a part; and Will had never been an important part of any circle.

Pris Blake remembered him, though in her busy life she had little time for day-dreams or sentimental regrets. Jock remembered him, though he soon gave up the howlings that had filled the first few nights his master was away, and the wistful watching and listening that had made Pris more than once, when no one was looking, go out and put her arm round his rough neck and kiss his grizzly head. He made himself quite at home at the Blakes', and followed the children to school and pottered about after the boys, assisting in their ratting adventures, but with a certain superior air as of one who had seen better sport in his day, and he spent a good deal of time asleep on the brick path in the sun or in front of the fire in the winter. He never took to Tom at all, and had a tendency to growl and show his teeth at him, though Tom tried hard to ingratiate himself with him with a view to possible rab-bittings in the future. But it was to Pris that Jock was particularly devoted, though she did not take very much notice of him in a general way, but he would come away from all the others to follow her, and he would lie on the edge of her dress when she would let him, or push a cold nose into her hand with a hasty caress he did not vouchsafe to other people, and sometimes he would look up at her with that strange, intent look which dogs give, that is a long way nearer sympathy than most of the empty chatter the lords of creation dignify with that name.

It was one Sunday in June that Jock was looking up at Pris with that look of understanding. She was sitting at the end of the garden on the low wall that divides it from the meadow, and Jock had got up by her side on the wall, and had given a gentle little rub against her arm to attract her attention to a sympathizing friend. She had not often time to notice Jock, but

she had washed up the dinner things and sent off the children to school. The others had gone out too, and for a wonder she felt a little idle and gave way to the feeling, sitting there in the sun, picking little bits of moss and lichen from between the stones, with Jock beside her. She had something extra to think of to-day, for Polly had come home for the day, very pretty and happy and nicely dressed, making Pris feel old and rough and shabby beside her. She had brought presents for the children, and they all clung about her, and made much of her, even Baby, who was like Pris's very own, had joined the admiring group, and stroked Polly's dress and strutted about with her parasol, and pulled her chair at dinner away from its usual place close to Pris to put it near Polly. Only Jock stuck close to Pris, and was not to be beguiled away by the charms of the new-comer.

But this was not all, for with Polly came a young man with whom she was keeping company, a very respectable, steady young man, of whom her mistress entirely approved. He was in a shop at Medington, and appeared exceedingly elegant in the eyes of Polly's family, and in Polly's own eyes, no doubt, he was perfection. She was a little afraid of what he would think of her home, and she wished Pris had put on her Sunday dress, if she had one, which was more than doubtful. But Polly was too placid and simple-minded to torment herself with such feelings, and Fred got on so well with them all and made himself so much at home, and the old cottage was so sunny and pleasant, with the roses out in bloom and the beans filling the air with their fragrance, that she felt he must like it. Indeed, though he and his mother lived in furnished lodgings which were very genteel, they were also somewhat close and stuffy, and he appreciated the airy freshness of the cottage, with its open door and the sweet scents that were wafted in from garden and hay-field and honeysuckle hedge.

After dinner father proposed a walk round the farm before church time.

"Couldn't you come too, Pris?" Polly said rather doubtfully, wondering if the old battered hat hanging on the nail behind the door were still Pris's only head covering.

"No," said Pris, with the least little tinge of bitterness in her heart. "No; I ain't smart enough, and besides I've got to wash up. There, go along," she added, as Polly stood hesitating, with compunction in her heart at leaving Pris. "Go

along, it's your holiday, ain't it? and you'd better make the best of it, for I'll be bound you works hard enough most days."

And then, with a motherly feeling in her heart for the young sister, she put her arm round her and gave her a sudden rough little kiss. "I likes your young man, Poll," she said; "he's a good sort. I likes his ways with father."

"Yes; ain't he nice?" Polly answered, beaming. "I knew you'd like him, Pris. You are a dear!"

And then she went off to join her lover; and Pris, having done her washing up, sat on the wall and thought, and, perhaps, for the first time in her life, a little feeling of discontent made itself felt.

"I never has no holiday! and I works hard enough, and I've not got a young man to walk out with on Sunday afternoons."

But at that very moment Jock, who had pushed his head confidingly under her arm, suddenly pulled it away and sat for a minute with pricked ears, quivering all over as if every faculty was absorbed in that of hearing, and then, with a shrill little bark of ecstatic delight, leapt off the wall and ran across the garden and out into the road.

Such a blaze of scarlet cloth and white pipeclayed belt and glitter of shining accoutrements! such a jingle of spurs and sword! such a smart military step and head held high in the June sunshine, drilling seeming to have added a couple of inches to his height. It was a wonder that Jock should have recognized his old master with his slouching gait and stooping shoulders — the master at whose shabby heels Jock had gone into so much mischief. But, bless your heart! it was Will Wiseman Jock loved and remembered not his clothes.

But Jock did not get much attention just then, for Will came striding in, flinging open the wicket-gate and clanking up the brick path in very different style from the furtive way in which he used to come in, as if he expected to be sent about his business, and was only there on sufferance, and half-a-dozen steps took him across the garden to where Pris sat still on the wall, and he had both her hands in his and was saying, "Pris, my girl, are you glad to see me?"

Changed? Why, he was not the least bit changed; it was the very same Will Wiseman that was looking down at her with those honest, loving brown eyes; the same Will that had peeled the potatoes and painted the children's throats; the

same that had come in that night when she was so upset about Tom's enlisting, with such a world of concern and pity for her in his face.

They sat for a bit on the wall and talked, with Jock every now and then squeezing in between them when he got a chance, and then, nothing would serve but that Pris should put on her hat and come out.

"You ain't never been out walking with me, Pris, that you ain't! And I come right away here and spoke to nobody; and I'd like to take a look round. And then there's church. Folks as is keeping company goes to church on Sundays, don't they? and I'd like folks to see as you and me was doing it all proper, eh, Pris? Not smart enough? Rubbish! I've seen a sight of gals since I left here and some on 'em smart enough, but not one fit to hold a candle to you."

"Go along with your nonsense!" said Pris, stroking down the splendid scarlet of his sleeve.

It was all nonsense she knew, but she had had so little nonsense in her life that it was very pleasant for a change. "I never has no holiday," she had said not half an hour before, and "I've not got a young man to walk out with me on Sunday afternoons," and now she was putting on her hat to go out for a holiday with a young man that she knew would be the envy of all the girls in the place. She wished she had a new hat, but what did it matter? "You looks nice in everything," Will said, "it don't matter what you has on."

And while he waited he filled the kettle for tea, showing that he had not forgotten the trick of the old well and the long pole that drew up the bucket. And then they started off down into the village, for the church bells had begun, and there was quite a commotion as they passed, the people not recognizing the ne'er-do-well gipsy-lad in the smart soldier. And not a glance or a whisper was lost on Pris, whose heart was full of pride in her soldier as they passed in at the churchyard gate, and he followed with his clanking spurs up the aisle to their usual seat, where Polly and her Fred had already been reaping a modest harvest of observation and attention from the neighbors, but were now quite thrown into the shade by the splendid apparition of Will's broad scarlet shoulders. It made Pris thrill all over with proud satisfaction to hear the clatter of Will's sword and buckles, when he got up or sat down, and though neither of them could see a word in the little

hymn-book they held together, and there were plenty more hard by, it gave them both acute pleasure to share it.

And when they came out of church Pris had a proud time of it, the vicar overtook them in the churchyard, and shook hands with him and clapped him on the shoulder and said he was glad to see him, this black sheep that had been regarded as such a discredit to the place. People who had not had a good word for him in old times now received him as *hail-fellow-well-met*. But it was the behavior of the girls that most amused and astonished Pris, girls who entirely ignored Will Wiseman in former days, who would not as much as look at him, now smiled their sweetest on him and called him Mr. Wiseman, and were of a sudden so friendly with Pris herself, and asked why she never came to see them, and wouldn't she and Mr. Wiseman come in and have a cup of tea, mother would be so pleased, as was saying only the other day, whatever have become of Pris Blake? and so on.

If one person offered them tea a dozen did, and Pris felt quite afraid that Will would be carried off by main force, so wonderfully hospitable had the Whistley people become. But Will drew her hand under his arm there before them all, with Bessie Green looking on with her fashionable new hat and kid gloves, and Miss Grove, the pupil teacher, who was almost a young lady, and yet looked very smilingly on Will, and he drew her away from them all, as if he could not be bothered to talk to them any longer, and wanted no one but her, which was just what he really felt.

They went round by Whistley Heath, where the old cottage stood empty and half in ruins, Will's grandfather having been moved into the workhouse infirmary nearly a year before. The heath was ablaze with gorse, quite dazzling in the sun, and in the garden, among the plentiful and flourishing weeds, self-sown flowers asserted themselves, mignonette and blue convolvulus and wall-flower; and on the briar that Will had budded himself was a lovely crimson rose that looked fine stuck in Pris's jacket.

"In four years I'll be coming home, Pris," he said, as he fastened the rose in, "and then I'll be three years in the reserve; but that won't hinder our being married. And I've a great notion as we'd try and get this old place. It would want a deal doing to it, but I'm handy like about a place, and I'd get it all as nice as a new pin for my wife, eh, Pris? But I'd

not idle about neither; I'd get regular work. Wouldn't I just work hard?"

And so on; and Pris listened with smiling eyes wandering away over the golden gorse. It was all scarlet and gold that day in Pris's memory.

And then they went back to tea, and Pris felt quite sorry for Polly, so entirely were she and Fred thrown into the shade by the glories of the new-comer. Why, by the side of Will, Fred looked the merest little counter-jumper, with narrow, sloping shoulders and crooked legs! and the children who had been such servile admirers of Polly and Fred at dinner now went over shamelessly to Will and swarmed about him, and had no eyes for any one else, and every now and then had to be cleared away with a sweep of the strong scarlet arm, for he would not let any of them come between him and Pris.

And father had forgotten all about that scene when he had sent Will off with a flea in his ear after the diphtheria, and he quite chirruped up and did not seem half as deaf as usual, and heard all that Will said to him better even than he had done Fred's remarks at dinner. Tom, to be sure, was a little bit glum, partly out of envy, fondly believing that he would have made every bit as fine a soldier as Will, "who was never reckoned of no account in old times;" and would not Susan have thought a lot of him then, instead of snubbing him as she had taken to doing of late? And added to this was the old feeling of puzzle as to what really happened that night at the Cricketers, when he was pretty well sure he had enlisted.

But no one paid much attention to Tom and his sulks, and nothing happened to disturb the brightness of the day within or without. You hear of people having red-letter days in their lives, but this June day was gorgeously illuminated with scarlet and gold on the dull page of Pris's quiet life.

But the brightest days come to an end, and Will had to be off to catch the last up-train, and father and Tom, with that dreadful want of consideration observable in fathers and brothers, proposed to go and see him off. But now it was Polly's turn to come to the rescue, and it spoke well for her kind heart, for she must have felt a little being thrown into the shade by her sister's splendid lover, and besides, it meant the sacrifice of her own lingering walk in the moonlight with Fred; but she made a little fuss about wanting father and Tom to wait and go with her and Fred, whose train was not for twenty min-

utes after Will's, and she whispered to Pris to hurry up and be off.

"I can walk out with Fred any day, but you ain't a chance of seeing your young man."

The positions were just reversed, and Pris could almost have laughed at the motherly tone in little Polly's voice, and the artful way in which she managed to engross father and Tom.

And so Pris and Will had their walk together across the hayfields and through the lanes, between the honeysuckle-laden hedges in the clear June moonlight, as pretty a walk as any one could wish to see, and especially in the moonlight, with the long shadows of the hedgerow elms falling across the broad meadows, and silver streaks of light drawn on Farmer Lloyd's big pond; but the barest, bleakest scene with a blizzard blowing in their faces would have been no less beautiful to those two.

"Good-bye. God bless you, dear. I don't know when I'll be able to see you again, as they say we're like to be sent abroad. But anyhow, in four years I'll be home, and you'll wait for me, Pris? You won't take up with any other chap? You'll wait for me?"

"Yes," she said, "I'll wait for you." And then he was gone.

CHAPTER V.

"It's sort of disappointing, for you see Will 'll be coming home this spring," Pris said, "and I'd aliked to have seen him."

She was a little easier that afternoon, and Polly had put the pillows so as to raise her and she could see out of the window into the garden, where the spring was beginning to show itself, in spite of the cold east wind, in buds on the gooseberry bushes and pink blossom on the ribes.

Mr. Mason, the vicar, had been in that afternoon, sitting with Pris, and had told her what had become sadly apparent during the last few days, that she was not likely to live very long.

It had been a very cold, bitter winter, and Pris had got a severe chill. There were so many to be thought of for sound boots and knitted stockings and flannel, that any one who came last in consideration, as Pris always did, was likely to come poorly off. (Polly cried a bit when she saw Pris's flannel petticoat.) The cold settled on Pris's lungs and she took no notice and crawled about as long as she was able, over the washing and cooking and cleaning that had to be done.

The boys had all left school by then, and were out at work at different farms, but Harry and Jimmy still lived at home and had to be washed and mended and done for by Pris, and kept out of mischief as much as possible. Lucy was the only one at school, and she was thirteen and nearly as tall as Pris, and nearly as old as Pris was when she took up the reins of government. Annie was nursemaid at the vicarage, and Tom had married his Susan a year ago, and had a slatternly, untidy wife and a constantly crying baby in his bare little home, neither of whom, I regret to say, kept him from very constant attendance at the Cricketers.

Sometimes it crossed Pris's mind whether after all it would not have been better for Tom to go as a soldier; whether this sort of slipshod life of Tom's was worth the sacrifice Will had made for it; but she was not given to vain speculations, and it is impossible for the wisest of us to estimate the worth while of things.

Pris had heard nothing of Will since that golden Sunday, but this had been no disappointment since she knew that he was a poor scholar, and her own scholarship was of such an unreliable character that a letter, even a love-letter, would have been rather an embarrassment, as it would have entailed the necessity of answering it and all by herself too, without Lucy's help, who was quite a good little scholar, and always took the main part of the labor of any family correspondence. But she reckoned the days back to that Sunday and on to the day when he would come home, comforting her patient heart with memory or anticipation when things went criss-cross as they are apt to do in life. It never occurred to her mind that Will might not come back, still less that when he came she might not be there to receive him.

When she got too ill to keep about, Polly came home to nurse her. Polly was going to be married very soon to her Fred, who had quite justified the good opinion they had formed of him, and had been very faithful to Polly and steady and hardworking in his business, so that he would have a comfortable home to offer her when the time came for their wedding.

Pris took what Mr. Mason said very quietly. He thought at first she hardly understood, she was very weak and he fancied that her mind was dulled and unable to take in fresh ideas. He had been a little bit nervous in telling her she was

going to die, and had expected great agitation and a scene that would wring his heart, but perhaps there was something more pathetic in the composed, matter-of-fact way she took it.

"Well, Annie's old enough now to come home and see to father, and his rheumatics ain't near so bad as they used to be since he wore that bit of new flannel; and Annie she knows about keeping his things aired, and if she can't quite manage the washing at first Tom's wife would help her a bit now and then; and Lucy, she's getting terrible handy, and she's a deal stronger than she were, and don't get that croupy cough in the winter as she used. I'd aliked to have finished them new shirts for Jimmy, but there! they're all cut out and Annie could place them so as Lucy could finish 'em off."

Her mind kept running off into what seemed to Mr. Mason insignificant details, not realizing how great a part in Pris's life such details had formed; but when he spoke of the great change that lay so near her, he could not tell whether she quite understood, though she said, "Yes, sure," and "There now! so 'tis," and repeated the "Amen" at the end of the prayers he said, and "Thank you kindly, sir," when he gave her his blessing and went away. He did not say anything about Will Wiseman, though he had not forgotten that Sunday and the proud look on Pris's face, but he had that feeling, shared by many, that, at the solemn hour of death, human love must be put aside with other worldly things, forgetting how strong in the suffering heart upon the cross the human love for the mother and the friend was, and how love is stronger than death, and never faileth though all else may vanish away.

After Mr. Mason had gone away Pris told Polly, in the words at the beginning of the chapter, the disappointment it was to go without seeing Will again, and she cried a little over it, and Polly, with the prospect of her own marriage so bright and near before her, said it did seem a bit hard and cried too. But after that Pris did not seem to fret, but lay very quiet, waiting for the end.

That end did not come till nearly a week had passed, and, indeed, she rallied a little, so that they thought perhaps she might get about again, and the end when it came was unexpected.

It was a bright, beautiful May afternoon. Lucy, when she came in from school to dinner, had brought a bit of gorse in flower, and Pris had seemed

quite pleased with it, and would have it laid on the broad window-ledge, for her bed was across the little window. The sun poured in bright and warm across the patchwork quilt, and Polly wanted to draw the curtain, but Pris would not let her.

Polly had been washing out a few things that morning and on the gooseberry bushes outside were hung some of her father's red cotton handkerchiefs. Whether it was this and the sun shining on the gorse that brought back that golden Sunday so vividly to Pris, I do not know.

But when she spoke, which was not very often, it was always of Will and of his red coat, and of his bright sword and spurs.

Jock, who was getting an old dog now, and lazy, and blind of one eye, had crept up and got on to the foot of the bed, an unheard-of intrusion in old times; but the last week he had done it unrebuked, for Pris seemed to like to have him there, and there was so little she cared for or noticed now, as mind and body fell into the drowsiness that often precedes the long sleep.

Polly had brought her work up-stairs that afternoon and sat by the bedside, not thinking Pris was worse in any way, for she was very quiet and seemed to doze off now and then.

But suddenly, she stirred and raised herself on her pillows with more strength than she had done for days past, and looked eagerly out of the window, over the golden gorse, into the garden where the sun shone on the red handkerchiefs drying on the gooseberry bushes; and such a look of surprise and pleasure and delight came into her face that Polly dropped her work and bent across the bed to see who it was coming up the path.

And not only Polly but Jock stirred too and pricked his ears, quivering all over with expectation as he had done that Sunday when he sat by Pris on the garden wall, and he gave, as then, a little shrill bark of ecstatic delight. But Polly could see no one. There was the old tom cat sunning himself on the bricks and eyed by a robin on the gate with inquisitive interest.

"There ain't no one," Polly said; "what did you see? I thought some one was coming in."

And some one indeed had entered, for when she turned to pick up her work and sit down again, she saw that death had come, silently, gently, kindly, and that Pris had fallen back with the sweet, bright

look of welcome and delight on her dead face.

"It do seem hard on her, poor girl, and her sweetheart coming home maybe tomorrow!" sobbed Polly that night to Fred who had come over to see her. "But there! God knows best."

But she was wrong when she said it was hard, and right, more right than she knew, when she said, "God knows best," for how few of us who use the words realize a hundredth part of the wisdom and tender mercy of his providence. Pris was spared long weeks, perhaps months of hope deferred, ending, if the news ever found its way to Whistley, in bitter disappointment, for Will Wiseman never came back, having died three weeks before Pris, of fever in the hospital at Aden on his way home to England. Could it have been that when the gate of death opened so gently for Pris to pass through, she could see Will in the brightness on the other side and that this accounted for the look of surprise and delight on her dying face? Who can say?

From The National Review.

CHILDREN AND MODERN LITERATURE.

IT is often said that "this is the Age of Children." If literature really reflects the feelings of the age there would seem to be much truth in the saying. What would our ancestors think if they could rise again and read books the main interest of which centres in children?

The thing is new; it is both a cause and an effect. Children owe a good deal to the way in which they have come to the front in literature, and they never would so have come to the front had not feeling changed with regard to them since the days when — according to Miss Edgeworth — the main duty of children was summed up in the lovely lines: —

Speak when you're spoken to,
Do as you're bid,
Shut the door after you,
And you'll never be chid.

I know that I read, many years ago, these lines in one of Miss Edgeworth's books, though, so far as my memory serves, they were not quoted with any special approval.

In stories written especially for children it is not unnatural that children should play an important part. This class of literature, however, is of modern growth. Not until the beginning of the present century were children considered

worthy of books peculiarly their own. I do not know that there is really any intimate connection between the Evangelical revival and the provision of books for the young; but I feel sure that the friends of my youth, Mrs. Sherwood and Mrs. Cameron, were among the first to write books about children which children really cared to read. It is very easy to turn some of those books into ridicule; yet they have the merit of being intensely real. There could not be anything more natural than the Fairchild family. The father and mother are prigs of the first water; but the children are true flesh and blood. Their very self-righteousness when they have been for a time free from fault is just as true to nature as their fearful falls from goodness to the depths of childish iniquity when Mr. and Mrs. Fairchild are away from home.

"Mamma," says Lucy, "we have not been naughty for a long time; we have been quite good." To which mamma replies: "Yes, my dear, because papa and I have always been with you and watched over you so closely."

Alas, poor Lucy! She is soon to find that her goodness is as the morning dew. Papa and mamma are called away to visit a sick friend. Naughtiness develops itself even while the children are getting up in the morning. Lucy ties the sheet round her and plays being Lady Noble. Emily makes the pillows into babies. Dressing does not progress as it ought to do. None of the girls is ready when brother Henry bangs at the door and announces that "John has made hot buttered toast; so do be quick, girls." They hurry down, forgetting to say their prayers—or, as Mrs. Sherwood puts it, "to do one single thing which they ought to have done." Nor is this all. They make more buttered toast in the dining-room, mess about in true childish fashion—very happy but very naughty.

It is a true touch which describes a quarrel that arises because Lucy takes upon her to command the other children to begin their lessons when breakfast is over. Who does not remember resenting the airs of command assumed by an elder brother or sister? Brother Henry does not appear to obey sister Lucy at all; for when his sisters are making an attempt at doing lessons he bursts in upon them with the exciting intelligence that "there is a little pig in the garden." Could any children resist the temptation to give chase? It runs, and, pig-like, instead of going over a bridge, must, forsooth, rush

through a stream, through which, in hot haste, the children follow.

One sin leads on to another! In order to get their wet clothes dried, they pay a visit to a neighbor whom mamma has strictly forbidden them to go near. True to nature once more, the naughty neighbor is most kind; dries their clothes, and gives them cowslip wine, which must have had brandy in it, for it makes them all rather tipsy.

The good old servant, John, meets them while they are still under the influence of the liquor, calls them "naughty rogues," takes them home to dinner, and, having tied them to their chairs, thinks they cannot get into further mischief; but he is wrong, for they go into the barn, where Emily falls out of a swing—and then the dread news comes that papa and mamma are coming home. What shall they do? John advises a full confession. The children fall on their knees, and beg for forgiveness. How far away child-life in the early part of this century is from child-life now, this scene alone is enough to prove. Fancy any of the children we see in Du Maurier's pictures falling on their knees to ask for pardon! It would be about as natural as for a young man of the period to be seen on his knees making a declaration of love to his Dulcinea. We have changed all that. Children are the ruling powers now; at any rate, they occupy a position of great importance.

If any one is inclined to sneer at such books as Mrs. Sherwood's, I wish he would try to write a story about children. I take it that there are few things more difficult to do well. One is pretty sure to suffer shipwreck between the Scylla of trying to be too funny and childlike or the Charybdis of being too wise and old. It is not easy to recall one's own past in such a way as to reproduce it faithfully, nor are there many men, at any rate, who so watch children as to know more than the outside of their lives. Children are on their guard in the presence of their elders. Their wisest and wittiest sayings, their most amusing and characteristic doings, are not said or done when the eyes of elders are upon them.

There seems to be in some men of genius a sort of intuition which enables them to understand much of which they have but little personal experience. A hint is enough for them. Imagination enables them to complete the picture. Hence, when such men try to paint pictures of child-life they succeed up to a certain point. It is, however, a new thing

in literature to care to succeed in this direction. Children must always have had interest for their own relations. Their sayings and doings have had a sort of tradition, but, up to recent times, no written records. The child of Themistocles must have been an object of high interest in his Athenian home, or we should not have had handed down to us the well-worn story which proves that human nature is much the same in every age: "My son rules Athens, for he rules his mother; she rules me, and I rule Athens." The Greek play has no place for children. Homer, indeed, who, like our own Shakespeare, seems to have had that sort of universal insight into the modes of human life that enabled him to touch upon every topic which comes home to the human heart, gives us a pretty story about Hector's infant son.

But children in ancient literature come in seldom, incidentally, in contrast with their elders. If they are introduced of set purpose it seems to be to bring into prominence the fact that brave men can be tender-hearted, and that women are seen at their best with children around them; or else to deepen the gloom of tragic sorrow.

It is not quite true to say that children have no place in Greek tragedy. The Medea of Euripides owes much of its terrible force to the fact that Medea murders her children. But the children are not introduced for their own sake. They utter but a few words—words wrung from them by terror. They are the mere means of making Medea's jealous rage more horrible, and the retribution which falls on Jason more complete. They help to show how complicated a thing is human passion; how many are the ways in which wrong-doers can be punished.

Much the same may be said as to the children introduced into Shakespeare's plays. The Arthur of "King John" is a touching picture. He is a true boy, but a boy seen amid such exceptional circumstances that his words and deeds do not give us much idea of ordinary boy-life. Some of his speeches smack too much of the philosopher. They are not, nor are they intended to be, the every-day language of childhood. What boy in ordinary life, about to have his eyes put out, would exclaim:—

Hubert, the utterance of a brace of tongues
Must needs want pleading for a pair of eyes?

Though the next line is boyish enough:—

Let me not hold my tongue; let me not, Hubert.

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Again, when Hubert says that he can heat the instrument, what boy would say this?

No, in good sooth; the fire is dead with grief,
Being create for comfort, to be used
In undeserved extremes; see else yourself.
There is no malice burning in this coal;
The breath of heaven hath blown his spirit
out,
And strewed repentant ashes on his head.

HUBERT.

But with my breath I can revive it, boy.

ARTHUR.

An' if you do, you will but make it blush,
And glow with shame of your proceedings,
Hubert.

And, like a dog that is compelled to fight,
Snatch at his master that doth tarr him on.

I venture to think that all this is very unlike the talk of a boy, even when that boy is made by force of circumstances unusually thoughtful. In "Richard III." we have children introduced; but they are by no means prominent figures. They do not long hold the stage, nor do they strike one as distinctively childlike. The fact is that in those days people would hardly have endured a play where, as in more than one modern drama, children were made the centre of attraction. The change is of gradual growth. Almost the first, if not quite the first, book which gave prominence to children was "Sandford and Merton," published in 1783. In my boyish days I thought it delightful. It never occurred to me then that Harry was an unmitigated little prig. I accepted him and Tommy and Mr. Barlow in perfect faith. Reading the book now, I cannot help wondering that I delighted in it so much then. Possibly children of to-day, more critical in their tastes, more ready to see the absurd side of things than were their parents, and having in their hands books much more amusing and true to life, would find "Sandford and Merton" either dull or merely a mark at which to shoot the arrows of their wit. But the book has great merit. Whatever may be said of Harry and Mr. Barlow, spoiled Tommy is real enough. A story that has been read for a hundred years, that has been burlesqued (as by Mr. Burnand), made fun of in many an article and in many home circles, and yet is read with interest, must have good stuff in it. If it had no other merit, it was original. It began a new era in literature. It showed that a book for the young could interest the old. Mrs. Barbauld (Anna Letitia Aikin) was almost contemporaneous with Mr. Day, the author of "Sandford and Merton." Her "Early

"Lessons in One Syllable" was in its way remarkably clever. Looking now at the funny little volumes of "Evenings at Home," one of which—fourth edition, too—bears the date 1798, one does not wonder, on opening them, to find that children are made to talk in fashion quite different from their present mode of conversation. But some of the stories are life-like enough. Little "Lord Linger" ordering out his pony, sending it back to the stable, starting for a drive, then for a walk, playing part of a game of billiards, "doing" a little reading, then some geography, giving a glance at his Virgil, aiming an arrow or two at a target, is not wholly unlike what a spoiled child might be nowadays; and certainly the boys he sees at play, when he finally makes up his mind to go for a ride with his servant at his heels, are just like boys of to-day.

A door flew open, and out burst a shoal of boys, who, spreading over the green, with immoderate vociferation, instantly began a variety of sports. Everything was noise, motion, and pleasure.

"Jack," said Lord Linger to one of his tenant's sons, "how do you like school?"

"Oh, pretty well, my lord!"

"What, have you a good deal of play?"

"Oh, no! We have only from twelve to two for play and eating our dinners; and then an hour before supper."

"That is very little indeed!"

"But we play heartily when we do play, and work when we work. Good-bye, my lord! It is my turn to go in at trap."

"I wish I was a schoolboy," said the little lord to himself.

A little later come Miss Edgeworth's stories about children. "Rosamond" was published in 1822.

"Moral Tales," which came out separately, were republished together in 1832.

Like "Sandford and Merton," these stories are too distinctly didactic; yet the time was when I, for one, thought them intensely interesting.

A horror I have had all my life of gambling in any form was, I fancy, inspired by "The Lottery Ticket."

I am not quite sure that I agree with Mrs. Oliphant when she says that "probably the virtues of the model young persons whom Miss Edgeworth holds up to the admiration of the youthful world are too matter-of-fact to please a young imagination. Our sympathy perversely goes astray with Ben, who buys a comfortable great-coat, to Harry, who chooses a green and white uniform instead; and we are less angry with Rosamond for admiring

the purple jar in the chemist's window than with her mother for permitting the child to buy it." This and a great deal of the criticism applied to children's books is due not so much to the way we regarded them when we were children ourselves as to our maturer notions of the fitness of things.

The point before us now, however, is the way in which modern literature came to take so much notice of child-life. Miss Edgeworth is a link between "Sandford and Merton," Mrs. Barbauld's books, and that vast mass of literature which during the last fifty years has brought children into such great prominence. I think, however, that there is one other cause which has led up to the result. In the books of Mr. Day, Mrs. Barbauld, and Miss Edgeworth there is much moral, but very little religious, teaching. The religion of the two former is untouched by the teaching of the Evangelical revival. It is extremely likely that the religious books written for children in such abundance early in this century owe their origin in some degree to a desire on the part of the writers to counteract what they felt to be false pictures of life—false, because religion is either wholly ignored or presented in a very imperfect manner.

I have already mentioned Mrs. Sherwood, who died in 1851. Her children are much more like ordinary flesh and blood than Harry the good in "Sandford and Merton," or even than Simple Susan, one of the very best child-characters Miss Edgeworth has given us. Her books showed that children could be made interesting not only to the young but to grown-up people.

Captain Marryat's boys are capital. There are plenty of them even in the books not specially written for children. Willy, in "The King's Own," is but a child when we make his acquaintance; but he is a power in the ship. He is the darling of the sailors. When Captain A— bids two marines turn their muskets upon the child, his cruel command defeats its own object, and gives the mutineers more help than half-a-dozen comrades could have done. The humanizing influence of a child upon the roughest men is set before us without a word of moralizing. The few words the child speaks to his father are just the words a child would speak amid the circumstances. When his father, condemned to death for mutiny, devotes him to the service of his country, and bids him "serve her bravely and faithfully," the little lad leans his head

on his father's shoulder, and says in a low tone, "I will;" and then — one seems to see the half-awestruck, half-wondering boyish face, and hear the childish treble — adds: "But what are they going to do with you, father?" When the final scene comes, and the father awaits his doom, little Willy, standing once more between the officers and marines in the after part of the deck and the ship's company forward — "as if he had been a little spirit of good, waving his fairy talisman; evil passions, which in the former scene were let loose, had retired to their darkest recesses, and all the better feelings of humanity were called forth — is the first to break the silence with the simplest and most natural question possible for a child: 'Where are you going, father, and why do you wear that night-cap?'" There is exquisite art in the whole picture. The childish figure relieves what would otherwise have been too dark a scene. As the story progresses, Willy still fills a large space in it, and is as manly, brave, and fine a lad as the child of such a father and mother was sure to be. Nor is he the only child in the book. Emily Rainscourt, the daughter of "the handsomest man in Dublin," who had made a bet that he would marry the reigning belle of that lively city within a certain time, does not appear many times while still a child, but is always natural, and shows how well Captain Marryat understood child-nature. Every one knows his "middles." They are but boys, and act like boys. Their rollicking fun, their practical jokes, their courage and devotion to duty when danger threatens, their very tenderness when the thought of far-away homes is brought vividly before them, are all intensely true.

"Masterman Ready" and the "Children of the New Forest," full of improbabilities as they are, still delight both young and old. I find that they are in brisk demand at a library where plenty of new books are to be had, and that they are read as much as Marryat's other books. Nor do I wonder at it. The island on which Masterman Ready and his young friends are wrecked is not to be found in any modern map; but the children who met with such wonders upon it are to be seen every day of our lives. The mixture of romance and reality must always have a charm for children, and characters like Master Tommy cannot fail to amuse both young and old.

Augustus Mayhew's "Paved with Gold" introduces a class of literature which was not indeed wholly new, because Dickens

had already written "Oliver Twist." It may be called the "Street Arab" literature. "Oliver Twist" dealt largely with the criminal classes. "Paved with Gold" takes us among the children who are on the border-land between honesty and crime. Oliver Twist, the hero of Dickens's book, is never more than an unwilling dweller in the haunts of vice. He abhors Fagin's den. The humors of Charley Bates and the Artful Dodger never amuse him. He lives an untainted life amidst the most loathsome conditions. So far as his child-life is concerned, its environment is always out of harmony with his inner feelings, except during the happy time when he is at kind Mr. Brownlow's.

Phil, like Oliver, is brought up in a workhouse. Unlike Oliver, he feels no particular abhorrence of the place. Its moral effect on him is that he regards the whole world as being a big union workhouse divided into two classes — paupers and guardians. Children brought up in a home where there is a fierce fight for food, fire, clothing, and rent, learn from their earliest years how the battle of life is fought by the poor. Phil, on the contrary, never hears the clink of coin, knows not how his bread and gruel are provided, has no idea of the necessity of working in order to live.]

It strikes me as peculiarly true to nature that the boys in the Industrial School who, just like boys at any other school, pounce upon a new-comer and overwhelm him with questions, should begin by asking Phil, "What's your parish?" and then be anxious to know whether he is a foundling. When Phil shows no inclination to answer, "Come, don't sulk," cried one of the boys, and pointing to another, he continued: "This chap here was tied in a fish-basket to the relieving officer's knocker." "No, I wasn't," retorted the other, in the midst of the laughter. "My mother's a washerwoman, and has two and sixpence a week and two loaves out-door relief on account of her rheumatics."

The eager desire to show that they had parents, and that those parents — one or both — were, according to workhouse standard, highly respectable personages, is strictly in accord with boy nature in the highest, as well as in the lowest, schools of our land.

I doubt whether in any of the books about London "Street Arabs" a more faithful picture is given of their life than in "Paved with Gold." Of course, Phil runs away from school and has many adventures. He only comes within the scope

of this article, however, as being about the first of a class of boys of whom we have read much of late years. Such books have answered a good purpose: they have drawn attention to the miseries of child-life in large towns, and when, as in the case with "Paved with Gold," they are vivid pictures of boy-life free from mawkish sentiment, true to nature, they are not only deeply interesting, but set men's minds to work to see how the evils indicated may be diminished, if they cannot be wholly eradicated. Dickens has done something in the same direction. He holds a high place among writers of this century who have made child-life attractive. He has given us pictures of the home-life of the poor, which are in some degree true; but he never quite ceases to be either a caricaturist or a sentimentalist. Tiny Tim is delightful, but not very true to life. There is one fatal blot in his children, a fault which they have in common with Miss Edgeworth's, and those of not a few other writers. They are good without adequate reason. It is neither theologically, nor as a matter of daily experience, true that a child will become a model of virtue if it is brought up amid circumstances little favorable to goodness.

Little Nell is a charming child; but little Nell is utterly unlike ordinary children. I admit the beauty and the pathos of the picture; but I cannot admit that it is lifelike.

So, again, with regard to Paul and Florence Dombey. Paul is perfectly delicious; but he is weird and unearthly. The only thing which gives reality to him is the fact of his bodily weakness. With an ordinarily healthy body such a child would be an impossibility.

It seems to me that writers who leave religion out of account in its bearing on the life of a child are bound to be unreal. I quite agree with Archbishop Whately that "any direct attempt at moral teaching in a fictitious narrative will, unless managed with the utmost discretion, interfere with what, after all, is the main object of the writer of fiction, as of the poet, to please. If instruction do not join as a volunteer, she will do no good service." But to give us a character pure, noble, good, where there is no reference to principles of religion, is false to fact. Oliver Twist is a case in point. He is from an early age surrounded by evil. He is never brought under religious teaching, or religious influence; yet he is represented as the very incarnation of virtue. We owe him a debt of gratitude; he is almost the

first child in secular literature intended for grown-up people who is made thoroughly interesting.

"Jane Eyre" was not published till nearly ten years later, and the interest which one cannot fail to feel in Jane as a child is rather of a melancholy sort. Dickens was never more successful in painting a child than in "David Copperfield"; but David is not a specimen of commonplace childhood. It is needful to remember this if we are to appreciate him properly. From the very first he has about him the air of genius. All children, unless they be abnormally dull and stupid, are full of fancies. They breathe the atmosphere of poetry. They see wonders in the heavens above and the earth beneath. Tragedy and comedy are ever chasing one another over the stage of their existence. Now they are in the depths of despair; now it would seem as if they and joy were inseparable companions. Yet I venture to think that such a child as David Copperfield is rare. The majority are made of more commonplace material. They would know better how to get on with Mr. and Miss Murdstone. Very few boys, nowadays at any rate, would, even at eight or nine years of age, be quite so easily imposed on by a waiter as to allow him to eat their dinner without uttering a word of protest. I am very doubtful, too, whether many boys would have been quite so lover-like to Little Emily, and have found such intense delight in Mr. Pegotty's wonderful house by the sea at Yarmouth. Still, one feels that David is real and from first to last consistent with himself, which, by the way, is more than can be said for all Dickens's characters — Ham Pegotty to wit, who, when we are first introduced to him, is little more than a half-witted, blundering lout, but becomes before the end of the story a really magnificent fellow.

Every one will call to mind many other child-characters in the writings of Dickens. No other male writer has given us so many. In my judgment none of his children can compare with those of certain female writers of whom I must speak. I have, however, drawn attention to the prominence of children in Dickens not so much in order to discuss his success or failure in this department, as to emphasize the fact that he was one of the first of the great writers of fiction who recognized the charm and interest which children give to a book.

Thackeray has given us a few incidental touches which show how well he could have succeeded had he wished to depict

child-life. A little later Henry Kingsley, in "Ravenshoe" and "Silcote of Silcote," and still more emphatically George Macdonald, lighten their pages by delicious pictures of youthful existence; but I think that there can be no reasonable doubt that it is women writers who have assured the popularity of children in fiction. I have already said that children are prominent in modern literature. It may with equal certainty be affirmed that their prominence is very welcome to a large class of readers. It is not wonderful that in this line women should have been highly successful. As it is only within the present century, and indeed in the latter half of the century, that women have themselves taken a prominent position in literature, it seems a fair inference that to them may be due more than to any other cause the change we have noted. But I doubt whether they could, without the aid of other influences, have absolutely produced the change of feeling with regard to children which has rendered their introduction into books popular. They may have given force and direction to the tide; they could hardly have turned it themselves. That they should succeed better than men was only natural. Close observation of child-life and memory of one's own childhood are both essential to success in producing a lifelike picture of children.

As a rule girls are more introspective than boys. They may not remember facts better; but they do remember modes of feeling more accurately. They have, or till very recently used to have, much less to distract attention from self than is the case with boys. Here and there one may meet with a quiet, thoughtful, self-questioning boy; but he is a *rara avis* indeed.

Because she took more note of her own feelings when a child, because her memory dwells more constantly on past joys and sorrows, because she is naturally more drawn to note carefully the characteristics of children, and has more opportunity for such observation than is generally the case with men, a woman, if she does but possess that power of imagination without which observation can do little or nothing, is almost certain to realize to herself, and therefore to depict for her readers, the lives of children much better than a man. Modern literature proves that what we should *a priori* expect is actually the case. It is, perhaps, hardly fair to bring forward George Eliot as a proof. She was a woman of masculine mind. She had an insight into human nature given to few. Yet I think that we can find men who are fully

her match in other departments of fiction, whilst I do not know one who can compare with her in the absolute truth and reality of her children.

Where else in literature can you find four children each so lifelike as Tom and Maggie Tulliver, Lucy Deane, and poor Bob, Tom's humble friend? They stand out as clearly as trees against a golden sunset. They are as real as the children you see every day of your life. Maggie is, of course, of a type rare and seldom seen, because she is gifted with genius. But compare her with David Copperfield. He, too, was meant to be exceptionally gifted; but, so far as I can see, he is shadowy and unreal when brought into comparison with the absolute flesh and blood of Maggie. Every throb of her passionate heart, every word of her often unwise tongue, every deed of her erratic life, is true to nature. Her longing to be like Lucy—fair and blue-eyed, clear-skinned, neat and tidy, always admired, never doing wrong, and yet to be herself—is essentially lifelike. She longs to be queen in the world of delight which she conjures up for herself, where love and kindness shall ever surround her, scolding, hardness, and misapprehension be unknown, but to be queen under Lucy's form. Both the vanity and the self-depreciation of such a character are absolutely true. How well, too, she is contrasted with Tom! Her impetuosity and apparent force are mere waves of the sea, which are broken by the immovable stolidity of Tom. He always knows his own mind. When he does wrong he has no violent fits of repentance. He has only done what he would do again. He knows nothing of that agonizing sense of doubt which is ever one of the trials of the imaginative nature.

What boy who has been brought up in the country does not know the charm which a lad like Bob would possess for another boy in a rather better position of life? Bob's knowledge of birds and their ways, of fishes, rats, weasels, stoats, and ferrets, his contempt for a dog that dare not tackle a rat together with his early cunning as to the ways of mankind, were sure to have a charm for a regular English boy like Tom Tulliver. Those boys may be met to-day in any English county. Even lads like poor Bob have not yet been improved off the face of the earth by School Boards and compulsory education.

Tom has a fine sense of honor. It will not permit him to allow Bob to rob him of a half-penny, though he cares nothing

for the money, any more than it will let him take the biggest bit of puff when that has fairly fallen to Maggie by the rule of "Choose with your eyes shut." Pretty, empty-headed Lucy's still walk the earth — girls so good that Mrs. Tulliver, with a sense of the wrong done her in having a very different sort of child in Maggie, says pathetically, "Lucy Dean's such a good child, you may set her on a stool and there she'll sit for an hour together, and never offer to get off." All these children think, speak, move, act like children.

I am not sure, however, that the greatest triumph of all is not the picture of the little one in "*Silas Marner*." Who but a woman would have drawn the picture of Effie when her mother, the victim of opium, has fallen on the snow into a sleep which shall pass into the long sleep of death? I must quote the passage *verbatim* : —

The complete torpor came at last; the fingers lost their tension, the arms unbent, then the little head fell away from the bosom and the blue eyes opened wide on the cold starlight. At first there was a little peevish cry of "Mammy," and an effort to regain the pillow arm and bosom; but mammy's ear was deaf, and the pillow seemed to be slipping away backward. Suddenly, as the child rolled downward on its mother's knees, all wet with snow, its eyes were caught by a bright dancing light on the white ground, and, with the ready transition of infancy, it was immediately absorbed in watching the bright living thing running towards it, yet never arriving. That bright living thing must be caught; and in an instant the child had slipped on all fours, and held out one little hand to catch the gleam. But the gleam would not be caught in that way, and now the head was held up to see where the cunning gleam came from. It came from a very bright place, and the little one, rising on its legs, toddled through the snow, the old grimy shawl in which it was wrapped trailing behind it, and the queer little bonnet dangling at its back, — toddled on to the open door of Silas Marner's cottage and right up to the warm hearth, where there was a bright fire of logs and sticks, which had thoroughly warmed the old sack (Silas's great-coat) spread out on the bricks to dry. The little one, accustomed to be left to itself for long hours without notice from its mother, squatted down on the sack and spread its tiny hands towards the blaze in perfect contentment, gurgling and making many inarticulate communications to the cheerful fire, like a new-hatched gosling beginning to find itself comfortable. But presently the warmth had a lulling effect, and the little golden head sank down on the old sack, and the blue eyes were veiled by their delicate half-transparent lids.

Could any man have painted that pic-

ture? If he had the artistic faculty of observation so developed as to have been able to give us the picture of the child slipping from the arms of the opium-overcome mother on to the snow, and of the dancing firelight, as it gleamed through the open door of Silas Marner's house, would a man have ever thought how a child would seek to grasp what looked like a living thing, and then follow it into the place from which it came?

It would be beside my purpose to do more than remind my readers how Silas Marner, when he first sees the golden head as it lies on the floor in front of his fire, fancies that at last his lost gold has been restored; how he finds that something better than gold has come to his hearth, his home, his heart. It is in her insight into the moral influence of children on their elders, no less than in the minute touches which render her pictures of child-life so perfect, that we see the supreme excellence of George Eliot when she deals with children.

It is not possible now to pass in review the many writers who have made children the centre of attraction in their books. This I hope to do in a future article. One point has been made clear. Whatsoever the cause or causes which have led up to the result, children play a much more important part in the literature of the nineteenth century than they have ever played in literature before. Whether this is due to the fact that they themselves are no longer repressed, brow-beaten, kept in the background, or whether their much happier lives at home and at school are due to the fact that their cause has been well pleaded by writers who influence the public mind, may be matter of question. The tendency of the age is towards gentleness, kindly consideration for the weak, liberty. Children have had their share in the happiness which that tendency fosters. Their elders have benefited by it in the closer friendship which exists between parents and children, in the removal from many a home of that stern discipline which divided the young from the old, in the happy consciousness that children regard them as friends, not tyrants. If the literature of our time, as can hardly be doubted, has done something to bring about such results, it has been a boon to both young and old. How large a part women have taken in the matter will be apparent when we deal with the books which have won wide popularity because they give more or less perfect pictures of child-life.

H. SUTTON.

From Temple Bar.
IN THE COUNTRY OF THE
ALBIGENSES.

A LONG, dull road or street, a statue of the navigator La Perouse, a bandstand with a few trees about it, and plain, modern buildings without character, some larger and more pretentious than others, but all uninteresting. Is this Albi? No, but it is what appears to be so to the stranger who enters the place from the railway station. The ugly sameness is what the improving spirit of our own times has done to make the ancient town decent and fit to be inhabited by folk who have seen something of the world north of Languedoc and who have learnt to talk of "le comfortable." The improvement is undoubtedly, but so is the absolute lack of interest and charm; at least, to those who are outside of the *persiennes* so uniformly closed against the summer sun.

Albi, the veritable historic Albi, lies almost hidden upon a slope that leads down to the Tarn. Here is the marvellous cathedral built in the thirteenth century, after the long wars with the Albigenses; here is the archbishop's fortified palace, still capable of withstanding a siege if there were no artillery; here are the old houses, one of pre-Gothic construction with very broad Romanesque window, slender columns and storied capitals, billet and arabesque mouldings, another of the sixteenth century quite encrusted with carved wood; and here are the dirty little streets like crooked lanes, where old women, who all through the summer months, Sundays excepted, give their feet an air-bath, may be seen sitting on the doorsteps clutching with one bony hand the distaff, and drowsily turning the spindle with the other.

To live in one of these streets might disgust the unseasoned stranger forever with southern life; but to roam through them in the early twilight is the way to find the spirit of the past without searching. Effort spoils the spell. Strange, indeed, must have been the procession of races, parties, and factions that passed along here between these very houses, or others which stood before them. Romans, Romanized Gauls, Visigoths, Saracens, and English; the Raymonds with their Albigenses, the Montforts with their crusaders from the north, the wild and sanguinary *pastoureaux* and the lawless *routiers*, the religious fanatics, Huguenots, and Catholics of the sixteenth century, and the Revolutionists of the eighteenth. All passed on their way, and the Tarn is

no redder now for the torrents of blood that flowed into it.

Notwithstanding that the name Albigenses was given after the Council of Lombers to the new Manichæans, Albi was less identified with the great religious and political struggle of southern Gaul in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries than were Castres and other neighboring towns. If, however, it was comparatively fortunate as regards the horrors of that ferocious war, it was severely scourged by the most appalling epidemics of the Middle Ages. Leprosy and the pest had terrors greater even than those of battle. The cruelty of those feudal ages finds one of its innumerable records in the treatment of the miserable lepers at Albi. Having taken the disease which the crusaders brought back from the East, they were favored with a religious ceremony distressingly similar to the office for the dead. A black pall was thrown over them while they knelt at the altar steps. At the close of the service a priest sprinkled some earth on the condemned wretches, and then they were led to the leper-house, where each was shut up in a cell from which he never came out alive. The black pall and the sprinkled earth were symbols which every patient understood but too well.

In nothing is the stern spirit of those ages expressed more forcibly than in the religious buildings of Languedoc. The cathedral of St. Cecilia at Albi is the grandest of all the fortified churches of southern France, although in many others the defensive purpose has made less concession to beauty. Looking at it for the first time, the eye is wonder-struck by its originality, the nobleness of its design, and the grandeur of its mass. The plan being that of a vast vaulted basilica without aisles, the walls of the nave rise sheer from the ground to above the roof, and are pierced at intervals with lofty but very narrow windows, the arches slightly pointed and containing simple tracery. The buttresses which help the walls to support the vaulting of the nave and choir are the most remarkable feature of the design, and, together with the tower, which rises in diminishing stages to the height of two hundred and sixty feet and there ends in an embattled platform, account for the singularly feudal and fortress-like character of the building. The outline of the buttresses being that of a semi-ellipse, they look like turrets carried up the entire face of the wall. The floor of the church is many feet above the ground, and the

entrance was originally protected by a drawbridge and portcullis; but these military works were removed in the sixteenth century, and in their place was raised, upon a *perron* reached by a double flight of steps, a baldachino-like porch as airy graceful and delicately florid as the body to which it is so lightly attached is majestically stern and scornful of ornament. The meeting here of those two great forces, the renaissance and feudalism, is like that of Psyche and Mars. But in expression the porch is Gothic, for although the arches are round-headed, they are surmounted by an embroidery of foliated gables and soaring pinnacles. The contrast is in feeling rather than in style.

Enter the church and observe the same contrast there. Gothic art within the protecting walls and under the strong tower puts forth its most delicate leaves and blossoms. Across the broad nave, nearly in the centre, is drawn a rood-screen—a piece of stone-work that has often been compared to lace, but which gains nothing by the comparison. The screen, together with the enclosure of the choir, with which it is connected, is quite bewildering by the multiplicity of arches, gables, tabernacles, pinnacles, statues, leaves, and flowers. The tracery is flamboyant, and the work dates from the beginning of the sixteenth century. The artificers are said to have been a company of wandering masons from Strasburg.

Two vast drum-shaped piers, serving to support the tower, are exposed to view at the west end of the nave; but, for the bad effect thus produced, compensation is offered by the very curious paintings, supposed to be of the fifteenth century, with which the surfaces of these piers are covered. They represent the Last Judgment and the torments of the damned. Each of the seven capital sins has its compartment wherein the kind of punishment reserved for sinners under this head is set forth in a manner as quaint as are the inscriptions in old French beneath. The compartment illustrating the eternal trouble of the envious has this inscription :

La peine des envieux et envieuses. Les envieux et envieuses sont en ung fleuve congelé plongés jusques au nombril et par dessus les frappe un vent moult froid et quant veulent icelluy vent éviter se plongent dedans ladite glace.

All the wall-surfaces, the vaulting included, are covered with paintings. The effect clashes with northern taste, but the absence of a columnar system affords a plausible reason for relieving the same-

ness of these large surfaces with color. The Gothic style of the north, holding in itself such decorative resources, gains nothing from mural paintings, but always loses something of its true character when they are added. Apart from such considerations, the wall-paintings in the cathedral of Albi have accumulated such interest from time, that no reason would excuse their removal.

This unique church was mainly built at the close of the thirteenth century, together with the archbishop's palace, with which it was connected in a military sense by outworks. These have disappeared, but the fortress called a palace remains, and is still occupied by the archbishop. It is a gloomy, rectangular mass of brick, absolutely devoid of elegance, but one of the most precious legacies of the Middle Ages in France. It is not so vast as the papal palace at Avignon, but its feudal and defensive character has been better preserved, for, unlike the fortress by the Rhône, it has not been adapted to the requirements of soldiers' barracks. At each of the angles is a round tower, pierced with loopholes, and upon the intervening walls are far-descending machicolations. The building is still defended on the side of the Tarn by a wall of great height and strength, the base of which is washed by the river in time of flood. This rampart, with its row of semi-elliptical buttresses corresponding to those of the church and its pepper-box tower at one end, the fortress a little above, and the cathedral on still higher ground, but in immediate neighborhood, make up an assemblage of mediæval structures that seems as strange in this nineteenth century as some old dream rising in the midst of day-thoughts. And the rapid Tarn, an image of perpetual youth, rushes on as it ever did since the face of Europe took its present form.

As I write, other impressions come to mind of this ancient town on the edge of the great plain of Languedoc. A little garden in the outskirts became familiar to me by daily use, and I see it still with its almond and pear trees, its trellised vines, the blue stars of its borage, and the pure whiteness of its lilies. A bird seizes a noisy cicada from a sunny leaf, and as it flies away, the captive draws out one long scream of despair. Then comes the golden evening, and its light stays long upon the trailing vines, while the great lilies gleam whiter and their breath floods the air with unearthly fragrance. A murmur from across the plain is growing

louder and louder as the trees lose their edges in the dusk, for those noisy revellers of the midsummer night, the jocund frogs, have roused themselves, and they welcome the darkness with no less joy than the swallows some hours later will greet the breaking dawn.

I left Albi to ascend the valley of the Tarn in the last week of June. I started when the sun was only a little above the plain; but the line of white rocks towards the north, from which Albi is supposed to take its name, had caught the rays and were already burning. The straight road, bordered with plane-trees, on which I was walking would have had no charm but for certain wayside flowers. There was a strange-looking plant with large, heart-shaped leaves and curved, yellow blossoms ending in a long upper lip that puzzled me much, and it was afterwards that I found its name to be *Aristolochia clematitis*. It grows abundantly on the banks of the Tarn. Another plant that I now noticed for the first time was a galium with crimson flowers. I soon came to the corn-fields for which the Albigeois plain is noted. Here the poppy showed its scarlet in the midst of the stalks of wheat still green, and along the borders were purple patches of that sun-loving campanula, *Venus's looking-glass*.

Countrywomen passed me with baskets on their heads, all going into Albi to sell their vegetables. Those who were young wore white caps with frills, which when there is nothing on the head to keep them down, rise and fall like the crest of a cockatoo; but the old women were steadfast in their attachment to the bag-like, close-fitting cap crossed with bands of black velvet and having a lace front that covers most of the forehead. When upon this coif is placed a great straw hat with drooping brim we have all that remains now of an Albigeois costume. As these women passed me I looked into their baskets. Some carried strawberries, some cherries, others mushrooms (*bolets*), or broad beans. The last-named vegetable is much cultivated throughout this region, where it is largely used for making soup. When very young the beans are frequently eaten raw with salt. Almost every taste is a matter of education.

The heat of the day had commenced when I reached the village of Lescure. This place (*Castrum scurie*) is of very ancient origin. Looking at it now and its agricultural population numbering little more than a thousand, it is difficult to realize its importance in the Middle Ages.

The castle and the adjacent land were given in the year 1003 by King Robert to his old preceptor, the learned Gerbert, who became known to posterity as Pope Sylvester II. In the eleventh century Lescure was therefore a fief of the Holy See, and in the time of Simon de Montfort the inhabitants were still vassals of the pope. In the fourteenth century they were frequently at war with the people of Albi, who eventually got the upper hand. Then Sicard, the baron of Lescure, was so completely humiliated that he not only consented to pay eighty gold *livres* to the consuls of Albi, but went before them bareheaded to ask pardon for himself and his vassals. Already the feudal system was receiving hard blows in the south of France from the growth of the communes and the authority vested in their consuls. What is left of the feudal grandeur of Lescure? The castle was sold in the year II. of the Republic and entirely demolished, with the exception of the chapel which is now the parish church. Of the outer fortifications there remains a brick gateway with Gothic arch carrying a high machicolated tower, connected to which is a fragment of the wall. To this, old houses, half brick, half wood, still cling, like those little wasps' nests that one sees sometimes upon the sides of the rocks.

On entering the small, fourteenth-century church I found that it had been decorated for a funeral. A broad band of black drapery, upon which had been sewn at intervals death's heads and tears, cut out of white calico, was hung against the wall of the apse, and carried far down each side of the nave. To me, all those grinning white masks, cut out with a pair of scissors by some one whose object was evidently to make the general effect as frightful as possible, were needless torture to the mourners; but here again we are brought to recognize that taste is a matter of education.

More interesting than anything else in this church is the Romanesque holy-water stoop, with heads and crosses carved upon it, and possibly belonging to the original chapel of the castle. The chief archaeological treasure, however, of Lescure is a church on a little hill above the village and overlooking the Tarn. It is dedicated to St. Michael, in accordance with the mediæval custom of considering the highest ground most appropriate to the veneration of the archangel. It is Romanesque of the eleventh century, and belonged to a priory of which no other trace is left. The building stands in the midst of an

abandoned cemetery, and at the time of my visit the tall June grasses, the poppies and white campions hid every mound and almost every wooden cross. Over the gateway carved in the stone is the following quaint inscription, the spelling being similar to that frequently used in the sixteenth century :—

*Sur la terre autrefois nous fûmes comme vous.
Mortels pensés y bien et priés Dieu pour nous.*

Beneath these lines are a skull and cross-bones with a tear on each side.

Facing the forgotten graves, upon this spot removed from all habitations, is the most beautiful Romanesque doorway of the Albigeois. The round-headed arch widening outwards, its numerous archivolts and mouldings, the slender columns of the deeply recessed jambs, the storied capitals with their rudely proportioned but expressive little figures, and the row of uncouth bracket-heads over the crowning archivolt, represent the best art of the eleventh century. They show that Romanesque architecture and sculpture had already reached their perfect expression in Languedoc. The figures in the capitals tell the story of Adam and Eve, Abraham and Isaac, and of fiends busily engaged in tormenting mortals who must have been in their clutches now eight hundred years. The nave has two aisles, and massive piers with engaged columns support the transverse and lateral arches. The columns have very large capitals, displaying human figures, some of which are extraordinarily fantastic, and instinct with a wild imagination still running riot in stone. What has become of the mind, or the psychic force as some prefer to term it, that bred these thoughts when southern Gaul was struggling to develop a new Roman art, by the aid of such traditions and models as the Visigoth, the Frank, and the Arab had not destroyed in the country, and such ideas as were brought along the Mediterranean from Byzantium? To this fanciful question which the influence of Romanesque sculpture may excuse, there comes no answer from the deep.

Lastly, I came to the apse, that part of a Romanesque church in which the artist seizes the purely religious ideal, or allows it to escape him. Here was the serenity, here the quietude of the early Christian purpose and hope. Perfect simplicity and perfect eloquence! Nothing more is to be said, except that there were stone benches against the wall and a *piscina*—details interesting to the archaeologist.

Then I walked round the little church, knee-deep in the long grave-grass, and noted the broad pilaster-strips of the apse, the stone eaves ornamented with billets, the bracket or corbel-heads just beneath, fantastic, enigmatic, and not two alike.

Leaving this spot, where there was so much temptation to linger, I began to cross a highly cultivated plain towards the village of Arthez, where the Tarn issues from the deep gorges which for many a league give it all the character of a mountain river. I thought from the appearance of the land that everybody who lived upon it must be prosperous and happy, but a peasant whom I met was of another way of thinking. He said :—

“ By working from three o’clock in the morning until dark, one can just manage to earn one’s bread.”

They certainly do work exceedingly hard these peasant-proprietors, never counting their hours like the town workers, but wishing that the day were longer, and if they can contrive to save anything in these days it is only by constant self-denial. A man’s labor upon his land today will only support him, taking the bad years with the good, on the condition that he lives a life of primitive simplicity. Even then the problem of existence is often a terribly hard one to solve. In the south of France the blame is almost everywhere laid to the destruction of the vines by the phylloxera, but here in the plain of Albi the land is quite as suitable for corn as it is for grape growing, which is far from being the case elsewhere; nevertheless, the peasants cry out with one voice against the bad times. They have to contend with two great scourges—hail that is so often brought by the thunderstorms in summer, and which the proximity of the Pyrenees may account for, and the south-east wind—*le vent d’au-tan*—that comes across from Africa, and scorches up the crops in a most mysterious manner. But for this plague the yield of fruit would be enormous. On the other hand, the region is blessed with lavish sunshine from early spring until November, and a half-maritime climate, explained by the neighborhood of the ocean—not the Mediterranean—renders long periods of drought, such as occur in Provence and lower Languedoc, rare. In the valleys the soil is extremely fertile, and, favored by moisture and warmth, its productive power is extraordinary. Four crops of lucern are taken from the same land in the course of a season. Unfortunately, these valleys being mere gorges—

cracks in the plain, with precipitous rocky sides—the strip of land bordering the stream at the bottom is usually very narrow.

On reaching Arthez the character of the country changed suddenly and completely. Here the plain with its tertiary deposits ended, and in its stead commenced the long series of schistous rocks wildly heaped up and twisted out of their stratification, by which the Tarn is hemmed in for seventy miles as the crow flies, and nearly twice that distance the windings of the gorge being reckoned. When the calcareous region of the Gévaudan is reached, the schist, slate, and gneiss disappear. On descending to the level of the river at Arthez, I saw before me one of the grandest cascades in France—the Saut de Sabo.

It is not so much the distance that the river falls in its rapid succession of wild leaps towards the plain, as the singularly chaotic and savage scene of dark rocks and raging waters, together with the length to which it is stretched out, that is so impressive. The mass of water, the multitude of cascades, and the wild forms of the rocks compose a scene that would be truly sublime if one could behold it in the midst of an unconquered solitude, but the hideous, sooty buildings of a vast iron foundry on one bank of the river are there to spoil the charm.

I stayed in the village of Arthez for food and rest, but not long enough for the midday heat to pass. When I set forth again on my journey the air was like the breath of a furnace; but as the slopes were well wooded with chestnuts there was some shelter from the rays of the sun. There were a few patches of vineyard, the leaves showing the ugly stains of sulphate of copper with which they had been splashed as a precaution against mildew, which in so many districts has followed in the wake of the phylloxera and hastened the destruction of the old vines. The Albigeois has ceased to be a wine-producing region, and judging from present signs it will be long in becoming one again.

The valley deepening and narrowing became a gorge, the beginning of that long series of fissures in the metamorphic and secondary rocks which, crossing an extensive tract of Languedoc and Guienne, leads the traveller up to the Cevennes Mountains, through scenery as wild and beautiful as any that can be found in France, and perhaps in Europe. But the difficulties of travelling by the Tarn from Arthez upwards are great, and, indeed,

quite forbidding to those who are not prepared to endure petty hardships in their search for the picturesque. Between Albi and St. Affrique, a distance that cannot be easily traversed on foot in less than four days, railways are not to be thought of, and the line of route taken by the diligence leaves the Tarn far to the north. In the valley the roads often dwindle away to mere paths or mule tracks, or they are so rocky that riding either upon or behind a horse over such an uneven surface, with the prospect of being thrown into the Tarn in the event of a slip, is unpleasant work. Those who are unwilling to walk or unable to bear much fatigue should not attempt to follow this river through its gorges. All the difficulties have not yet been stated. Along the banks of the stream, and for several miles on either side of it, there are very few villages, and the accommodation in the auberges is about as rough as it can be. The people generally are exceedingly uncouth, and between Arthez and Millau, where a tourist is probably the rarest of all birds of passage, the stranger must not expect to meet with a reception invariably cordial. Even a Frenchman who appears for the first time in one of their isolated villages, and who cannot speak the Languedocian dialect, is looked upon almost as a foreigner, and is treated with suspicion by the inhabitants. This matter of language is in itself no slight difficulty. French is so little known that in many villages the clergy are compelled to preach in *patois* to make themselves understood.

This region I had now fairly entered. The road had gone somewhere up the hills, and I was walking beside the river upon sand glittering with particles of mica. This sand the Tarn leaves all along its banks. It is one of the most uncertain and treacherous of streams. In a few hours its water will rise with amazing rapidity and spread consternation in a district where not a drop of rain has fallen. Warm winds from the south and southwest striking against the cold mountains in the Lozère have been condensed and the water has flowed down in torrents towards the plain. The river is as clear as crystal now, and the many-colored pebbles of its bed reflect the light, but a thunderstorm in the higher country may change it suddenly to the color of red earth.

The path led me into a steep forest, where I lost sight of the Tarn. The soil was too rocky for the trees—oaks and chestnuts chiefly—to grow very tall; consequently the underwood, although dense,

was chequered all through with sunshine. Heather and bracken, holly and box made a wilderness that spread over all the visible world, for the opposite side of the gorge was exactly similar. Shining in the sun amidst the flowering heather or glowing in majestic purple grandeur in the shade of shrubs stood many a foxglove, and almost as frequently seen was its relative, *digitalis lutea*, whose flowers are much smaller and of a pale yellow. Now and again a little rill went whispering downward through the woods under plumes of forget-me-nots in a deep channel that it had cut by working age after age. Reaching at length a spot where I could look down into the bottom of the fissure, I perceived a small stream that was certainly not the Tarn. I had been ascending one of the lateral gorges of the valley and had left the river somewhere to the north. My aim was now to strike it again in the higher country, and so I kept on my way. But the path vanished and the forest became so dense that I was bound to realize that I was in difficulties. I resolved to try the bank of the stream, and reached it after some unpleasant experience of rocks, brambles, and holly. Here, however, was a path which I followed nearly to the head of the gorge and then climbed to the plateau. There the land was cultivated, and the musical note of a cock turkey that hailed my coming from afar as he swaggered in front of his harem on the march, led me to a spot where a man was moving, and he told me where I should find the Tarn, which he, like all other people in the country, pronounced Tar.

Evening was coming on when I had crossed this plateau, and I saw far below me the village of Marsal on the banks of the shining Tarn. The river here made one of those bold curves which add so much to its beauty. The little village looked so peaceful and charming that I decided to seek its hospitality for that night.

There was but one inn at Marsal that undertook to lodge the stranger, and very seldom was any claim of the sort made upon it. The peasant family who lived in it looked to their bit of land and their two or three cows to keep them, not the auberge. The bottles of liquor on the shelf were rarely taken down, except on Sundays, when villagers might saunter in, to gossip and smoke over coffee and *eau de vie*, or the glass of absinth, which, since the failure of the vines in the south of France, has become there the most con-

vivial of all drinks, although it makes men more quarrelsome than any other. In these poor riverside villages, however, where a mere ribbon of land is capable of cultivation, and which, although exceedingly fertile, is constantly liable to be flooded by the uncertain Tarn, men have so little money in their pockets that water is their habitual drink, and when they depart from this rule, they make a little dissipation go a very long way.

I found this single auberge closed, and all the family in an adjoining field around a wagon already piled with hay, to which a couple of cows were harnessed. My appearance there brought the pitchforks suddenly to a rest. If I had been shot up from below like a stage-devil, these people could not have stared at me with greater amazement and a more frank expression of distrust. First in *patois*, and then, seeing that I was at a loss, in scarcely intelligible French, they asked me what my trade was, and what object I had in coming to Marsal. I tried to explain that I was not a mischievous person, that I was travelling merely to look at their beautiful rocks and gorges, but I failed completely to bring a hospitable expression into their faces. An old man of the party was the worst to deal with. He put the greater number of questions and understood the least French, and all the while there was a most provokingly keen, suspicious glitter in his little grey eyes. Presently he beckoned me, and led the way, as I thought, to the inn; but such was not his intention. He stopped at the door of the Communal School, where the schoolmaster was already waiting for me, for he had evidently been warned of the presence of a doubtful-looking stranger, who had come to the village on foot with a pack on his back, and who, being dressed a trifle better than the ordinary tramp, was probably the more dangerous for this reason. Like most of the village schoolmasters in France, this gentleman was also secretary of the *mairie*, a function highly stimulating to the sense of self-importance, and no wonder, considering that the person who fills it frequently supplies the mayor, who may scarcely be able to sign his name to official documents, with such intelligence as he may need for his public duties.

This schoolmaster was affable and pleasant, but as a crowd quickly collected to see what would happen, he was not going to let a good opportunity slip of showing how indispensable he was to the safety of the village. He said that personally he was quite satisfied with my explanations,

From Macmillan's Magazine.
WILLIAM COBBETT.

but that in his official capacity he was compelled to ask me for my papers. These were forthcoming, and the serious, official air with which he pretended to read the English passport from beginning to end was very pretty comedy considering that he did not understand a word of the language.

Having asserted his importance, and made the desired impression, he invited me into his house, introduced me to his young wife, who was charmingly gracious, and who would have been pleased to see any fresh face at Marsal — English or Hottentot. I was really indebted to the schoolmaster, for he harangued in *patois* the people of the inn drawn up in line, and by seizing a word here and there, I made out that I was a respectable Englishman travelling to improve my mind, and that they might receive me into their house without any distrust. And they did receive me, almost with open arms, when their doubts were removed.

The old man slunk off, and I never saw him again; but the young couple to whom the inn had been given up, now proved to me that their only wish was to please. They were rough people, but sound at heart and honest, as the French peasants, when judged in the mass, undoubtedly are. The hostess was greatly perplexed to know how to get up a dinner for me, and as she told me afterwards, she went to the schoolmaster and held a consultation with him on the subject. An astonishing dish of minced asparagus fried in oil was concocted in accordance with his prescription. It was ingenious, but I preferred her dish of barbel from the Tarn, notwithstanding the multitudinous bones which this fish perversely carries in its body, to choke the enemy, although nothing could be more absurd than such petty vengeance.

The schoolmaster's wife said to me, with a suggestion of malice at the corners of her mouth, that she was afraid I should be troubled by a few fleas at the auberge. "Oh! bast!" observed her husband. "Monsieur in his travels has doubtless already encountered a flea or two."

"Yes, and other *bestioles*," said I.

Madame's local knowledge did not deceive her, but her expression, "a few fleas," did not at all represent the true state of affairs. And I had forgotten the precious powder and the little pair of bellows, without which no one should travel in southern France, especially in the valley of the Tarn.

EDWARD HARRISON BARKER.

To acquaint oneself properly with the works of Cobbett is no child's play. It requires some money, a great deal of time, still more patience, and a certain freedom from superfineness. For as few of his books have recently been reprinted, and as they were all very popular when they appeared, it is frequently necessary to put up with copies exhibiting the marks of that popularity in a form with which Coleridge and Lamb professed to be delighted, but to which I own that I am churl enough to prefer the clean, fresh leaves of even the most modern reprint. And the total is huge; for Cobbett's industry and facility of work were both appalling, and while his good work is constantly disfigured by rubbish, there is hardly a single parcel of his rubbish in which there is not good work. Of the seventy-four articles which compose his bibliography, some of the most portentous, such as the "State Trials" (afterwards known as Howell's) and the "Parliamentary Debates" (afterwards known as Hansard's), may be disregarded as simple compilation; and it is scarcely necessary for any one to read the thirty years of the *Register* through, seeing that almost everything in it that is most characteristic reappeared in other forms. But this leaves a formidable total. The "Works of Peter Porcupine," in which most of Cobbett's writings earlier than this century and a few later are collected, fill twelve volumes of fair size. The only other collection, the "Political Works," made up by his sons after his death from the *Register* and other sources, is in six volumes, none of which contains less than five hundred, while one contains more than eight hundred large pages, so closely printed that each represents two if not three of the usual library octavo. The "Rural Rides" fill two stout volumes in the last edition; besides which there are before me literally dozens of mostly rather grubby volumes of every size from Tull's "Husbandry," in a portly octavo, to the "Legacy to Laborers," about as big as a lady's card-case. If a man be virtuous enough, or rash enough, to stray further into anti-Cobbett pamphlets (of which I once bought an extremely grimy bundle for a sovereign) he may go on in that path almost forever. And I see no rest for the sole of his foot till he has read through the whole of "the bloody old *Times*" or "that foolish drab Anna Brodie's rubbish," as Cobbett used with indifferent geniality to call that newspaper,

— the last elegant description being solely due to the fact that he had become aware that a poor lady of the name was a shareholder.

Let it be added that this vast mass is devoted almost impartially to as vast a number of subjects, that it displays throughout the queerest and (till you are well acquainted with it) the most incredible mixture of sense and nonsense, folly and wit, ignorance and knowledge, good temper and bad blood, sheer egotism and sincere desire to benefit the country. Cobbett will write upon politics and upon economics, upon history ecclesiastical and civil, upon grammar, cookery, gardening, woodcraft, standing armies, population, ice-houses, and almost every other conceivable subject, with the same undoubting confidence that he is and must be right. In what plain men still call inconsistency there never was his equal. He was approaching middle life when he was still writing cheerful pamphlets and tracts with such titles as "The Bloody Buoy," "The Cannibal's Progress," and so on, destined to hold up the French Revolution to the horror of mankind; he had not passed middle life when he discovered that the said Revolution was only a natural and necessary consequence of the same system of taxation which was grinding down England. He denied stoutly that he was anything but a friend to monarchical government, and asseverated a thousand times over that he had not the slightest wish to deprive landlords or any one else of their property. Yet for the last twenty years of his life he was constantly holding up the happy state of those republicans the profligacy, injustice, and tyranny of whose government he had earlier denounced. He sometimes came near, if he did not openly avow, the "hold-the-harvest" doctrine; and he deliberately proposed that the national creditor should be defrauded of his interest, and therefore practically of his capital. A very shrewd man naturally, and by no means an ill-informed one in some ways, there was no assertion too wildly contradictory of facts, no assumption too flagrantly opposed to common sense, for him to make when he had an argument to further or a craze to support. "My opinion is," says he very gravely, "that Lincolnshire alone contains more of those fine buildings [churches] than the whole continent of Europe." The churches of Lincolnshire are certainly fine; but imagine all the churches of even the western continent of Europe, from the abbey of Batalha to Cologne Cathedral,

and from Santa Rosalia to the Folgoët, crammed and crouching under the shadow of Boston Stump! He "dare say that Ely probably contained from fifty to a hundred thousand people" at a time when it is rather improbable that London contained the larger number of the two. Only mention Jews, Scotchmen, the national debt, the standing army, pensions, poetry, tea, potatoes, larch-trees, and a great many other things, and Cobbett becomes a mere, though a very amusing, maniac. Let him meet in one of his peregrinations, or merely remember in the course of a book or article, some magistrate who gave a decision unfavorable to him twenty years before, some lawyer who took a side against him, some journalist who opposed his pamphlets, and a torrent of half humorous but wholly vindictive Billingsgate follows; while if the luckless one has lost his estate, or in any way come to misfortune meanwhile, Cobbett will jeer and whoop and triumph over him like an Indian squaw over a hostile brave at the stake. Mixed with all this you shall find such plain, shrewd common sense, such an incomparable power of clear exposition of any subject that the writer himself understands, such homely but genuine humor, such untiring energy, and such a hearty desire for the comfort of everybody who is not a Jew or a jobber or a tax-eater, as few public writers have ever displayed. And (which is the most important thing for us) you shall also find sense and nonsense alike, rancorous and mischievous diatribes as well as sober discourses, politics as well as trade-puffery (for Cobbett puffed his own wares unblushingly), all set forth in such a style as not more than two other Englishmen, whose names are Defoe and Bunyan, can equal.

Like theirs it is a style wholly natural and unstudied. It is often said, and he himself confesses, that as a young man he gave his days and nights to the reading of Swift. But except in the absence of adornment, and the uncompromising plainness of speech, there is really very little resemblance between them, and what there is is chiefly due to Cobbett's following of the "Drapier's Letters," where Swift, admirable as he is, is clearly using a falsetto. For one thing, the main characteristic of Swift — the perpetual, unforced, unflagging irony which is the blood and the life of his style — is utterly absent from Cobbett. On the other hand, if Cobbett imitated little, he was imitated much. Although his accounts of the circulation

of his works are doubtless exaggerated as he exaggerated everything connected with himself; it was certainly very large; and though they were no doubt less read by the literary than by the non-literary class, they have left traces everywhere. As a whole, Cobbett is not imitable; the very reasons which gave him the style forbade another to borrow it. But certain tricks of his reappear in places both likely and unlikely; and since I have been thoroughly acquainted with him I think I can see the ancestry of some of the mannerisms of two writers whose filiation had hitherto puzzled me — Peacock and Borrow. In the latter case there is no doubt whatever; indeed, the kinship between Borrow and Cobbett is very strong in many ways. Even in the former I do not think there is much doubt, though Peacock's thorough scholarship and Cobbett's boisterous unscholarliness make it one of thought rather than of form, and of a small part of thought only.

He has left an agreeable and often-quoted account of his own early life in an autobiographic fragment written to confound his enemies in America. He was born on March 9th, 1762,* at Farnham; and the chief of his interests during his life centred round the counties of Hampshire and Surrey, with Berkshire and Wiltshire thrown in as benefiting by neighborhood. His father was a small farmer, not quite uneducated, but not much in means or rank above a laborer, and all the family were brought up to work hard. After some unimportant vicissitudes, William ran away to London and, attempting quill-driving in an attorney's office for a time, soon got tired of it and enlisted in a marching regiment which was sent to Nova Scotia. This was in the spring of 1784. As he was steady, intelligent, and not uneducated, he very soon rose from the ranks, and was sergeant-major for some years. During his service with the colors he made acquaintance with his future wife (a gunner's daughter of the literal and amiable kind), and with Lord Edward Fitzgerald. The regiment came home in 1792, and Cobbett got his discharge, married his beloved, and went to France. Unfortunately he had other reasons besides love and a desire to learn French for quitting British shores. He had discovered, or imagined, that some of his officers were guilty of malversation of regimental money; he abused his position as ser-

geant-major to take secret copies of regimental documents; and when he had got his discharge he lodged his accusation. A court-martial was granted. When it met, however, there was no accuser, for Cobbett had gone to France. Long afterwards, when the facts were cast up against him, he attempted a defence. The matter is one of considerable intricacies and of no great moment. Against Cobbett it may be said to be one of the facts which prove (what indeed hardly needs proving), that he was not a man of any chivalrous delicacy of feeling, and did not see that in no circumstances can it be justifiable to bring accusations of disgraceful conduct against others and then run away. In his favor it may be said that, though not a very young man, he was not in the least a man of the world, and was no doubt sincerely surprised and horrified to find that his complaint was not to be judged off-hand and Cadi-fashion, but with all sorts of cumbersome and expensive forms.

However this may be, he went off with his wife and his savings to France; and enjoyed himself there for some months, tackling diligently to French the while, until the Revolution (it was, let it be remembered, in 1792) made the country too hot for him. He determined to go to Philadelphia, where, and elsewhere in the United States, he passed the next seven years. They were seven years of a very lively character; for it was the nature of Cobbett to find quarrels, and he found plenty of them here. Some accounts of his exploits in offence and defence may be found in the biographies, fuller ones in the books of the chronicles of Peter Porcupine, his *nom de guerre* in pamphleteering and journalism. Cobbett was at this time, despite his transactions with the judge advocate general, his flight and his selection of France and America for sojourn, a red-hot Tory and a true Briton, and he engaged in a violent controversy, or series of controversies, with the pro-Gallic and anti-English party in the States. The works of Peter, besides the above-quoted "Bloody Buoy" and "Cannibal's Progress," contain in their five thousand pages or thereabouts, other cheerfully named documents, such as, "A Bone to Gnaw for the Democrats," "A Kick for a Bite," "The Diplomatic Blunderbuss," "The American Rushlight," and so on. This last had mainly to do with a non-political quarrel into which Cobbett got with a certain quack doctor named Rush. Rush got Cobbett cast in heavy damages for libel; and though these

* Cobbett himself says 1766, and the dates in the fragment are all adjusted to this; but biography says 1762.

were paid by subscription, the affair seems to have disgusted our pamphleteer and he sailed for England on June 1st, 1800.

There can be little doubt, though Cobbett's own bragging and the bickering of his biographers have rather darkened than illuminated the matter, that he came home with pretty definite and very fair prospects of government patronage. More than one of his Anti-Jacobin pamphlets had been reprinted for English consumption. He had already arranged for the London edition of "Porcupine's Works" which appeared subsequently; and he had attracted attention not merely from literary understrappers of government but from men like Windham. Very soon after his return Windham asked him to dinner, to meet not merely Canning, Ellis, Frere, Malone and others, but Pitt himself. The publication of the host's diary long afterwards clearly established the fact, which had been rather idly contested or doubted by some commentators. How or why Cobbett fell away from Pitt's party is not exactly known, and is easier to understand than to definitely explain; even when he left it is not certain. He was offered, he says, a government paper, or even two; but he refused and published his own *Porcupine*, which lasted for some time till it lapsed (with intermediate stages) into the famous *Weekly Register*. In both, and in their intermediates for some three or four years at least, the general policy of the government, and especially the war with France, was stoutly supported. But Cobbett was a free-lance born and bred, and he never during the whole of his life succeeded in working under any other command than his own, or with any one on equal terms. He got into trouble before very long owing to some letters, signed *Juverna*, on the Irish executive; and though his contributor (one Johnson, afterwards a judge), gave himself up, and Cobbett escaped the fines which had been imposed on him, his susceptible vanity had no doubt been touched. It was also beyond doubt a disgust to his self-educated mind to find himself regarded as an inferior by the regularly trained wits and scholars of the government press; and I should be afraid that he was annoyed at Pitt's taking no notice of him. But, to do Cobbett justice, there were other and nobler reasons for his revolt. His ideal of politics and economics (of which more presently), though an impossible one, was sincere and not ungenerous; and he could not but perceive that a dozen years of war had made its contrast with the actual state

of the British farmer and laborer more glaring than ever. The influence which he soon wielded, and the profit which he derived through the *Register*, at once puffed him up and legitimately encouraged the development of his views. He bought, or rather (a sad thing for such a denouncer of "paper"), obtained, subject to heavy mortgages, a considerable estate of several farms at and near Botley in Hampshire. Here for some five years (1805 to 1809), he lived the life of a very substantial yeoman, almost a squire, entertaining freely, farming, coursing, encouraging boxing and single-stick, fishing with drag-nets, and editing the *Register* partly in person and partly by deputy. Of these deputies, the chief were his partner, and afterwards foe, the printer Wright, and Howell of the "State Trials." This latter, being unluckily a gentleman and a university man, comes in for one of Cobbett's characteristic flings as "one of your college gentlemen," who "have and always will have the insolence to think themselves our betters; and our superior talents, industry, and weight only excite their envy." Prosperity is rarely good for an Englishman of Cobbett's stamp, and he seems at this time to have decidedly lost his head. He had long been a pronounced Radical, thundering or guffawing in the *Register* at pensions, sinecures, the debt, paper-money, the game-laws (though he preserved himself), and so forth; and the authorities naturally enough only waited for an opportunity of explaining to him that immortal maxim which directs the expectations of those who play at this kind of bowls. In July, 1809, he let them in by an article of the most violent character on the suppression of a mutiny among the Ely Militia. This had been put down, and the ringleaders dogged by some cavalry of the German Legion; and Cobbett took advantage of this to beat John Bull's drum furiously. It has been the custom to turn up the whites of the eyes at Lord Ellenborough who tried the case, and Sir Vicary Gibbs who prosecuted; but I do not think that any sane man, remembering what the importance of discipline in the army was in 1809, can find fault with the jury who, and not Ellenborough or Gibbs, had to settle the matter, and who found Cobbett guilty. The sentence no doubt was severe — as such sentences to such cases were then wont to be — two years in Newgate. The judge, in imposing a fine of a thousand pounds, and security in the same amount for seven years to come, may be thought to have looked before and after as

well as at the present. But the *Register* was not stopped, and Cobbett was allowed to continue in it without hindrance a polemic which was not likely to grow milder. For he never forgot or forgave an injury to his interests, or an insult to his vanity; and he was now becoming, quite honestly and disinterestedly more and more of a fanatic on divers points, both of economics and of politics proper.

I cannot myself attach much importance to the undoubted fact that after the trial, which happened in June, 1810, but before judgment, Cobbett, aghast for a moment at the apparent ruin impending, made (as he certainly did make) some overtures of surrender and discontinuance of the *Register*. Such a course in a man with a large family and no means of supporting it but his pen, would have been, if not heroic, not disgraceful. But the negotiation somehow fell through. Unluckily for Cobbett, he on two subsequent occasions practically denied that he had ever made any offer at all; and the truth only came out when he and Wright quarrelled, nearly a dozen years later. This, the affair of the court-martial, and another to be mentioned shortly, are the only blots on his conduct as a man that I know, and in such an Ishmael as he was they are not very fatal.

He devoted the greater part of his time, during the easy, though rather costly imprisonment of those days, to his "Paper against Gold," in which, with next to no knowledge of the subject, he attacked probably the thorniest of all subjects, that of the currency; and the *Register* went on. He came out of Newgate in July, 1812, naturally in no very amiable temper. A mixture of private and public griefs almost immediately brought him into collision with the authorities of the Church. He had long been at loggerheads with those of the State; and it was now more than ever that he became the advocate (and the most popular advocate it had) of Parliamentary Reform. He was, however, pretty quiet for three or four years, but at the end of that time, in September, 1816, he acted on a suggestion of Lord Cochrane's, cheapened the *Register* from one shilling to twopence, and opened the new series with one of his best pamphlet addresses, "To the Journeymen and Laborers of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland." For a time he was very much in the mouths of men; but ministers were not idle, and prepared for him a state of things still hotter than he had experienced before. Cobbett did not give it time to

heat itself specially for him. He turned his eyes once more to America, and, very much to the general surprise, suddenly left Liverpool on March 22nd, 1817, arriving in May at New York, whence he proceeded to Long Island, and established himself on a farm there. Unluckily there were other reasons for his flight besides political ones. His affairs had become much muddled during his imprisonment, and had not mended since; and though his assets were considerable they were of a kind not easy to realize. There seems no doubt that Cobbett was generally thought to have run away from a gaol in more senses than one, and that the thought did him no good.

But he was an impossible person to put down; even his own mistakes, which were pretty considerable, could not do it. His flight, as it was called, gave handles to his enemies, and not least to certain former friends, including such very different persons as Orator Hunt and Sir Francis Burdett; it caused a certain belatedness, and, for a time, a certain intermittency, in his contributions to the *Register*; it confirmed him in his financial crazes, and it may possibly have supported him in a sort of private repudiation of his own debts, which he executed even before becoming legally a bankrupt. Finally it led him to the most foolish act of his life, the lugging of Tom Paine's bones back to a country which, though not prosperous, could at any rate provide itself with better manure than that. In this famous absurdity the purely silly side of Cobbett's character comes out. For some time after he returned he was at low water both in finances and in popularity; while such political sanity as he ever possessed, may be said to have wholly vanished. Yet oddly enough, or not oddly, the transplanting and the re-transplanting seem to have had a refreshing effect on his literary production. He never indeed again produced anything so vigorous as the best of his earlier political works, but in non-political and mixed styles he even improved; and though he is occasionally more extravagant than ever in substance, there is a certain mellowness of form which is very remarkable. He was not far short of sixty when he returned in 1819; but the space of his life subsequent to his flight yielded the "Year's Residence in America," the "English Grammar," the "Twelve Sermons," the "Cottage Economy," the "English (altered from a previous American) Gardener," the "History of the Reformation," the "Woodlands,"

"Cobbett's Corn," the "Advice to Young Men," and a dozen other works original or compiled, besides the "Rural Rides" and his other contributions to the *Registers*.

He could not have lived at Botley any longer if he would, for the place was mortgaged up to the eyes. But to live in a town was abhorrent to him; and he had in America rather increased than satisfied his old fancy for rural occupations. So he set up house at Kensington, where he used a large garden (soon supplemented by more land at Barnes, and in his very last years by a place near Ash in his native district) as a kind of seed farm, selling the produce at the same shop with his *Registers*. He also utilized his now frequent rural rides, partly as commercial travelling for the diffusion of locust-trees, swede turnip seed and Cobbett's corn — a peculiar kind of maize, the virtues of which he vaunted loudly.

Also he began to think seriously of sitting in Parliament. At the general election after George the Third's death he contested Coventry, but without even coming near success. Soon afterwards he had an opportunity of increasing his general popularity — which, owing to his flight, his repudiation, and the foolery about Paine's bones, had sunk very low — by vigorously taking Queen Caroline's side. But he was not more fortunate in his next Parliamentary attempt at Preston, in 1826. Preston, even before the Reform Bill, was, though the Stanley influence was strong, a comparatively open borough, and had a large electorate; but it would not have Cobbett, nor was he ever successful till after the bill passed. Before its passing the very Whig government which had charge of it was obliged to pull him up. If he had been treated with undeserved severity before he was extremely fortunate now, though his rage against his unsuccessful Whig prosecutors was, naturally enough, much fiercer than it had been against his old Tory enemies. I do not think that any fair-minded person who reads the papers in the *Register*, and the cheaper and therefore more mischievous *Two-penny Trash*, devoted to the subject of "Swing," can fail to see that under a thin cloak of denunciation and dissuasion their real purport is "Don't put him under the pump," varied and set off by suggestions how extremely easy it would be to put him under the pump, and how improbable detection or punishment. And nobody, further, who reads the accounts of the famous Bristol riots can fail to see

how much Cobbett (who had been in Bristol just before in full cry against "Tax-Eaters" and "Tithe-Eaters") had to do with them. It was probably lucky for him that he was tried before instead of after the Bristol matter, and even as it was he was not acquitted; the jury disagreed. After the bill, his election somewhere was a certainty, and he sat for Oldham till his death. Except a little foolery at first, and at intervals afterwards, he was inoffensive enough in the House. Nor did he survive his inclusion in that Collective Wisdom at which he had so often laughed many years, but died on June 19th, 1835, at the age of seventy-three. If medical opinion is right the Collective Wisdom had the last laugh; for its late hours and confinement seemed to have more to do with his death than any disease.

I have said that it is of great importance to get if possible a preliminary idea of Cobbett's general views on politics. This not only adds to the understanding of his work, but prevents perpetual surprise and possible fretting at his individual flings and crazes. To do him justice there was from first to last very little change in his own political ideal; though there was the greatest possible change in his views of systems, governments, and individuals in their relations to that ideal and to his own private interests or vanities. In this latter respect Cobbett was very human indeed. The son of a farmer-laborer, and himself passionately interested in agricultural pursuits, he may be said never, from the day he first took to politics to the day of his death, to have really and directly considered the welfare of any other class than the classes occupied with tilling or holding land. In one place he frantically applauds a real or supposed project of King Ferdinand of Spain for taxing every commercial person who sold, or bought to sell again, goods not of his own production or manufacture. If he to a certain extent tolerated manufactures, other than those carried on at home for immediate use, it was grudgingly, and indeed inconsistently with his general scheme. He frequently protests against the substitution of the shop for the fair or market; and so jealous is he of things passing otherwise than by actual delivery in exchange for actual coin or payment in kind, that he grumbles at one market (I think Devizes) because the corn is sold by sample and not pitched in bulk on the market floor. It is evident that if he possibly could have it, he would have a society purely agricultural, men making what things the earth does not directly

produce as much as possible for themselves in their own houses during the intervals of field labor. He quarrels with none of the three orders — laborer, farmer, and landowner — as such; he does not want "the land for the people," or the landlord's rent for the farmer. Nor does he want any of the lower class to live in even mitigated idleness. Eight hours' days have no place in Cobbett's scheme; still less relief of children from labor for the sake of education. Everybody in the laboring class, women and children included, is to work and work pretty hard; while the landlord may have as much sport as ever he likes provided he allows a certain share to his tenant at times. But the laborer and his family are to have "full bellies" (it would be harsh but not entirely unjust to say that the full belly is the beginning and end of Cobbett's theory), plenty of good beer, warm clothes, staunch and comfortably furnished houses. And that they may have these things they must have good wages; though Cobbett does not at all object to the truck or even the "Tommy" system. He seems to have, like a half socialist as he is, no affection for saving, and he once, with rather disastrous consequences, took to paying his own farm-laborers entirely in kind. In the same way the farmer is to have full stack-yards, a snug farmhouse, with orchards and gardens thoroughly plenished. But he must not drink wine or tea, and his daughters must work and not play the piano. Squires there may be of all sorts, from the substantial yeoman to the lord (Cobbett has no objection to lords), and they may, I think, meet in some way or other to counsel the king (for Cobbett has no objection to kings). There is to be a militia for the defence of the country, and there might be an Established Church provided that the tithes were largely, if not wholly, devoted to the relief of the poor and the exercise of hospitality. Everybody, provided he works, is to marry the prettiest girl he can find (Cobbett had a most generous weakness for pretty girls) as early as possible and have any number of children. But though there is to be plenty of game, there are to be no game-laws. There is to be no standing army, though there may be a navy. There is to be no, or the very smallest, civil service. It stands to reason that there is to be no public debt; and the taxes are to be as low and as uniform as possible. Commerce, even on the direct scale, if that scale be large, is to be discouraged, and any kind of middleman absolutely exter-

minated. There is to be no poetry (Cobbett does sometimes quote Pope, but always with a gibe), no general literature (for though Cobbett's own works are excellent, and indeed indispensable, that is chiefly because of the corruptions of the times), no fine arts — though Cobbett has a certain weakness for church architecture, mainly for a reason presently to be explained. Above all there is to be no such thing as what is called abroad a *rentier*. No one is to "live on his means," unless these means come directly from the owning or the tilling of land. The harmless fund-holder with his three or four hundred a year, the government clerk, the half-pay officer, are as abhorrent to Cobbett as the pensioner for nothing and the sinecurist. This is the state of things which he loves, and it is because the actual state of things is so different, and for no other reason, that he is a radical reformer.

I need not say that no such connected picture as I have endeavored to draw will be found in any part of Cobbett's works.* The strokes which compose it are taken from a thousand different places and filled in to a certain extent by guess work. But I am sure it is faithful to what he would have drawn himself if he had been given to imaginative construction. It will be seen at once that it is a sort of parallel in drab homespun, a more practical double (if the adjective may be used of two impracticable things), of Mr. William Morris's agreeable dreams. The art tobacco-pouches, and the museums, the young men hanging about off Biffin's to give any one a free row on the river, and so forth, were not in Cobbett's way. But the canvas, and even the main composition of the picture, is the same. Of course the ideal State never existed anywhere, and never could continue to exist long if it were set up in full working order tomorrow. Laborer A. would produce too many children, work too few hours, and stick too close to the ale-pot; farmer B. would be ruined by a bad year or a murrain; squire C. would outrun the non-existent constable and find a Jew to help him, even if Cobbett made an exception to his hatred of placemen for the sake of a crown toothdrawer. One of the tradesmen who were permitted on sufferance to supply the brass kettles and the grandfathers' clocks which Cobbett loves would produce better goods and take better care of the proceeds than another, with the

* The nearest approach is in the "Manchester Lectures" of 1831; but this is not so much a project of an ideal State as a scheme for reforming the actual.

result of a better business and hoarded wealth. In short, men would be men, and the world the world, in spite of Cobbett and Mr. Morris alike.

I doubt whether Cobbett, who knew something of history, ever succeeded in deceiving himself, great as were his powers that way, into believing that this state ever had existed. He would have no doubt gone into a paroxysm of rage and have called me as bad names as it was in his heart to apply to any Hampshire man, if I had suggested that such an approach to it as existed in his beloved fifteenth century was due to the Black Death, the French wars, and those of the Roses. But the fair vision ever fled before him day and night, and made him more and more furious with the actual state of England, — which was no doubt bad enough. The laborers with their eight or ten shillings a week and their Banyan diet, the farmers getting half price for their ewes and their barley, the squires ousted by Jews and jobbers, filled his soul with a certainly not ignoble rage, only tempered by a sort of exultation to think in the last case that the fools had brought their ruin on their own heads by truckling to "the Thing." "The Thing" was the whole actual social and political state of England; and on everything and everybody that had brought "the Thing" about he poured impartial vitriol. The war which had run up the debt and increased the tax-eaters at the same time; the boroughmongers who had countenanced the war; the Jews and jobbers that negotiated and dealt in the loans; the Parsons that ate the tithes; the lawyers that did government work, — Cobbett thundered against them all. But his wrath also descended upon far different, and one would have thought sufficiently guiltless, things and persons. The potato, the "soul-destroying root" so easy to grow (Cobbett did not live to see the potato famine or I fear he would have been rather hideous in his joy) so innutritious, so exclusive of sound beef and bread, has worse language than even a stock-jobber or a sinecurist. Tea, the expeller of beer, the pamperer of foreign commerce, the waster of the time of farmers' wives, is nearly as bad as the potato. I could not within any possible or probable space accorded me here follow out a tithe or a hundredth part of the strange ramifications and divagations of Cobbett's grand economic craze. The most comical branch perhaps is his patronage of the Roman Catholic Church, and the most comical twig of that branch his firm belief that

the abundance and size of English churches testify to an infinitely larger population in England of old than at the present day. His rage at the impudent Scotchman who put the population at two millions when he is sure it was twenty, and the earnestness with which he proves that a certain Wiltshire vale having so many churches capable of containing so many people must have once had so many score thousand inhabitants, are about equally amusing. That in the days which he praises much, and in which these churches were built, the notion of building a church to seat so many would have been regarded as unintelligible if not blasphemous; that in the first place the church was an offering to God, not a provision for getting worship done; and that in the second, the worship of old with its processions, its numerous altars in the same churches, and so on, made a disproportionate amount of room absolutely necessary, — these were things you could no more have taught Cobbett than you could have taught him to like "Marmion" or read the "Witch of Atlas."

It is, however, time, and more than time, to follow him rapidly through the curious labyrinth of work in which, constantly though often very unconsciously keeping in sight this ideal, he wandered from Pittite Toryism to the extreme of half socialist and wholly radical Reform. His sons, very naturally but rather unwisely, have in the great selection of the "Political Works" drawn very sparingly on Peter Porcupine. But no estimate of Cobbett that neglects the results of this, his first, phase will ever be satisfactory. It is by no means the most amusing division of Cobbett's works; but it is not the least characteristic, and it is full of interest for the study both of English and of American politics. The very best account that I know of the original American Constitution, and of the party strife that followed the peace with England, is contained in the summary that opens the works. Then for some years we find Cobbett engaged in fighting the Jacobin party, the fight constantly turning into skirmishes on his private account, conducted with singular vigor if at a length disproportionate to the present interest of the subject. Here is the autobiography before noticed, and in all the volumes, especially the earlier ones, the following of Swift, often by no means unhappy, is very noticeable. It is a little unlucky that a great part of the whole consists of selections from Porcupine's *Gazette* that is to say, of actual

newspaper matter of the time,—“slag-heaps,” to use Carlyle’s excellent phrase, from which the metal of present application has been smelted out and used up long ago. This inconvenience also and of necessity applies to the still larger collection, duplicating, as has been said, a little from Porcupine, but principally selected from the *Register*, which was published after Cobbett’s death. But this is of far greater general importance, for it contains the pith and marrow of all his writings on the subject to which he gave most of his heart. Here, in the first volume, besides the selection from Porcupine, are the masterly “Letters to Addington on the Peace of Amiens,” in which that most foolish of the foolish things called armistices is treated as it deserved, and with a combination of vigor and statesmanship which Cobbett never showed after he lost the benefit of Windham’s patronage and (probably) inspiration. Here too is a defence of bull-baiting after Windham’s own heart. The volume ends with the “Letters to William Pitt,” in which Cobbett declared and supported his defection from Pitt’s system generally. The whole method and conduct of the writings of this time are so different from the rambling denunciations of Cobbett’s later days, and from the acute but rather desultory and extremely personal Porcupinades, that one is almost driven to accept the theory of “inspiration.” The literary model too has shifted from Swift to Burke,—Burke upon whom Cobbett was later to pour torrents of his foolest abuse; and both in this first and in the second volume the reformer appears wandering about in search of subjects not merely political but general, Crim. Con., Poor-laws, and so forth. But in the second volume we have to notice a paper still in the old style and full of good sense, on boxing. In the third Cobbett is in full Radical cry. Here is the article which sent him to Newgate; and long before it a series of virulent attacks on the Duke of York in the matter of Mrs. Clarke, together with onslaughts on those Anti-Jacobins to whom Cobbett had once been proud to belong. It also includes a very curious “Plan for an Army,” which marks a sort of middle stage in Cobbett’s views on that subject. The latter part of it, and the whole of the next (the fourth) consist mainly of long series on the Regency (the last and permanent Regency), on the regent’s disputes with his wife, and on the American War. All this part displays Cobbett’s growing ill-temper, and also the

growing wildness of his schemes—one of which is a sliding scale adjusting all salaries, from the Civil List to the soldier’s pay, according to the price of corn. But there is still no loss of vigor, if some of sanity; and the opening paper of the fifth volume, the famous “Address to the Laborers” aforesaid, is, as I have said, perhaps the climax of Cobbett’s political writing in point of force and form—which thing I say utterly disagreeing with almost all its substance. This same fifth volume contains another remarkable instance of Cobbett’s extraordinary knack of writing, as well as of his rapidly decreasing judgment, in the “Letter to Jack Harrow, an English Laborer, on the new Cheat of Savings Banks.” At least half of the volume dates after Cobbett’s flight, while some is posterior to his return. The characteristics which distinguish his later years, his wild crotchets and his fantastic running-a-muck at all public men of all parties and not least at his own former friends, distinguish both it and the sixth and last, which carries the selection down to his death. Yet even such things as the “Letter to Old George Rose” and that from “The Laborers of the ten little Hard Parishes [this was Cobbett’s name for the district between Winchester and Whitchurch, much of which had recently been acquired by the predecessors of Lord Northbrook] to Alexander Baring, Loan-monger,” both, at a considerable distance of time, show the strength and the weakness of this odd person in conspicuous mixture. He is as rude, as coarse, as personal as may be; he is grossly unjust to individuals and wildly flighty in principle and argument; it is almost impossible to imagine a more dangerous counsellor in such, or indeed in any times. Except that he is harder-headed and absolutely unchivalrous, his politics are very much those of Colonel Newcome. And yet the vigor of the style is still so great, the flame and heat of the man’s conviction are so genuine, his desire according to the best he knows to benefit his clients, and his unselfishness in taking up those clients, are so unquestionable that it is impossible not to feel both sympathy and admiration. If I had been dictator about 1830 I think I should have hanged Cobbett; but I should have sent for him first and asked leave to shake hands with him before he went to the gallows.

These collections are invaluable to the political and historical student; and I hardly know any better models, not for the exclusive, but for the eclectic attention

of the political writer, especially if his education be academic and his tastes rather anti-popular. But there is better pasture for the general student. The immense variety of the works, which, though they cannot be called non-political — Cobbett would have introduced politics into arithmetic and astronomy, as he actually does into grammar — are not political in main substance and purport. They belong almost entirely, as has been said, to the last seventeen or eighteen years of Cobbett's life; and putting the "Year's Residence" aside, the "English Grammar" is the earliest. It is couched in a series of letters to his son James, who had been brought up to the age of fourteen on the principle (by no means a bad one) of letting him pick up the Three R's as he pleased, and leaving him for the rest "To ride and hunt and shoot, to dig the beds in the garden, to trim the flowers, and to prune the trees." It is like all Cobbett's books, on whatever subject, a wonderful mixture of imperfect information, shrewd sense, and fantastic crotchets. On one page Cobbett calmly instructs his son that "prosody" means "pronunciation;" on another, he confuses "etymology" with "accidence." This may make the malicious college bred man envious of the author's superior genius; but there is no doubt that the book contains about as clear an account of the practical and working nature and use of sound English speech and writing as can anywhere be found. Naturally Cobbett is not always right; but if any one will compare his book, say with a certain manual composed by a very learned Emeritus professor in a certain university of Scotland, and largely inflicted on the youth of that kingdom as well as to some extent on those of the adjoining realm, he will not, I think, be in much doubt which to prefer. The grammar was published in 1818, and Cobbett's next book of note was the "Religious Tracts," afterwards called "Twelve Sermons." He says that many persons had the good sense to preach them; and indeed, a few of his usual outbursts excepted, they are as sound specimens of moral exhortation as anybody need wish to hear or deliver. They are completed characteristically enough by a wild onslaught on the Jews, separately paged, as if Cobbett was a little ashamed of it. Then came the "Cottage Economy," instructing and exhorting the English laborer in the arts of brewing, baking, stock-keeping of all sorts, making straw bonnets, and building ice-houses. This is perhaps the most

agreeable of all Cobbett's minor books, next to the "Rural Rides." The descriptions are as vivid as "Robinson Crusoe, and are further lit up by flashes of the genuine man. Thus, after a most peaceable and practical discourse on the making of rush-lights, he writes: "You may do any sort of work by this light; and if reading be your taste you may read the foul libels, the lies, and abuse which are circulated gratis about me by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge." Here, too, is a charming piece of frankness: "Any beer is better than water; but it should have *some* strength and *some* weeks of age at any rate." A rearrangement of the "Horseshoeing Industry" of Jethro Tull, barrister, and the "French Grammar" hardly count among his purely and originally literary work; but the "History of the Reformation" is one of its most characteristic if not one of its most admirable parts. Cobbett's feud with the clergy was now at its height; he had long before been at daggers drawn with his own parson at Botley. The gradual hardening of his economic crazes made him more and more hate "Tithe-Eaters," and his wrath with them was made hotter by the fact that they were as a body opponents of reform. So with a mixture of astounding ignorance and of self-confidence equally amazing, he set to work to put the crudest Roman view of the Reformation and of earlier times into his own forcible English. The book is very amusing; but it is so grossly ignorant, and the virulence of its tirades against Henry VIII., and the rest so palpable, that even in that heated time it would not do. It may be gathered from some remarks of Cobbett's own that he felt it a practical failure; though he never gave up its views, and constantly in his latest articles and speeches invited everybody to search it for the foundation of all truth about the Church of England. The more important of his next batch of publications, the "Woodlands," the "English Gardener," "Cobbett's Corn," restore a cooler atmosphere; though even here there are the usual spurts. Very amusing is the suppressed wrath of the potato article in the "English Gardener," with its magnanimous admission that "there appears to be nothing unwholesome about it; and it does very well to qualify the effects of the meat or to assist in the swallowing of quantities of butter." Pleasing, too, is the remark, "If this turnip really did come from Scotland, there is something good that is Scotch." The "Cobbett's Corn,"

already noticed, is one of the most curious of all his books, and an instance of his singular vigor in taking up fancies. Although he sold the seed, it does not appear that he could in any case have made much profit out of it; and he gave it away so freely that it would, had it succeeded, soon have been obtainable from any seedsman in the kingdom. Yet he writes a stout volume about it, and seems to have taken wonderful interest in its propagation, chiefly because he hoped it would drive out his enemy the potato. The English climate was naturally too much for it; but the most amusing thing, to me at least, about the whole matter is the remembrance that the "yellow meal" which it, like other maize, produced, became a short time after Cobbett's own death the utter loathing and abomination of English and Irish paupers and laborers, a sort of sign and symbol of capitalist tyranny. Soon afterwards came the last of Cobbett's really remarkable and excellent works, the "Advice to Young Men and Incidentally to Young Women," one of the kindest and most sensible books of its kind ever written. The other books of Cobbett's later years are of little account in any way; and in the three little "Legacies" (to Laborers, to Peel, and to Parsons) there is a double portion of now cut-and-dried crotchet in matter, and hardly any of the old power in form.

Yet to the last, or at any rate till his disastrous election, Cobbett was Cobbett. The "Rural Rides," though his own collection of them stopped at 1830, went on to 1832. This, the only one of his books, so far as I know, that has been repeatedly and recently reprinted, shows him at his best and his worst; but almost always at his best in form. Indeed, the reader for mere pleasure need hardly read anything else, and will find there to the full the delightful descriptions of rural England, the quaint, confident, racy, wrong-headed opinions, the command over the English language and the ardent affection for the English soil and its children, that distinguish Cobbett at his very best.

I have unavoidably spent so much time on this account of Cobbett's own works, — an account which without copious extract must be, I fear, still inadequate, — that the anti-Cobbett polemic must go with hardly any notice at all. Towards the crisis of the Reform Bill it became very active, and at times remarkable. Among two collections which I possess, one of bound tracts dating from this period, the other of loose pamphlets ranging over the

greater part of Cobbett's life, the keenest by far is a certain publication called "Cobbett's Penny Trash," which figures in both, though one or two others have no small point. The enemy naturally made the utmost of the statement of the condemned laborer Goodman, who lay in Horsham Gaol under sentence of death for arson, that he had been stirred up by Cobbett's addresses to commit the crime; but still better game was made controversially of his flagrant and life-long inconsistencies, of his enormous egotism, of his tergiversation in the matter of the offer to discontinue the *Register*, and of his repudiation of his debt to Sir Francis Burdett. And the main sting of the "Penny Trash," which must have been written by a very clever fellow indeed, is the imitation of Cobbett's own later style, its italics, its repetitions, its quaint mannerisms of fling and vaunt. The example of this had of course been set much earlier by the Smiths in "Rejected Addresses," but it was even better done here.

Cobbett was indeed vulnerable enough. He, if any one, is the justification of the theory of Time, Country, and *Milieu*, and perhaps the fact that it only adjusts itself to such persons as he is the chief condemnation of that theory. Even with him it fails to account for the personal genius which after all is the only thing that makes him tolerable, and which when he is once tolerated, makes him almost admirable. Only an English "*Terræ Filius*," destitute of the education which the traditional "*Terræ Filius*" had, writing, too, in the stress of the great Revolutionary struggle and at hand-grips with the inevitable abuses which that struggle at once left unbettered, after the usual gradual fashion of English betterment, and aggravated by the pressure of economic changes — could have ventured to write with so little knowledge or range of logical power, and yet have written with such individual force and adaptation of style to the temper of his audience. At a later period and in different circumstances Cobbett could hardly have been so acrimonious, so wildly fantastic, so grossly and almost impudently ignorant, and if he had been he would have been simply laughed at or unread. At an earlier period, or in another country, he would have been bought off or cut off. Even at the same time the mere circumstantial fact of the connection of most educated and well-informed writers with the government or at least with the regular opposition, gave such a free-lance as this an unequalled opportunity of making

himself heard. His very inconsistency, his very ferocity, his very ignorance, gave him the key of the hearts of the multitude, who just then were the persons of most importance. And to these persons that characteristic of his which is either most laughable or most disgusting to the educated — his most unparalleled, his almost inconceivable egotism — was no drawback. When Cobbett with many italics in an advertisement to all his later books told them, "When I am asked what books a young man or young woman ought to read I always answer: 'Let him or her read *all the books that I have written*,'" proceeding to show in detail that this was no humorous gasconade but a serious recommendation, one "which it is my *duty* to give," the classes laughed consumedly. But the masses felt that Cobbett was at any rate a much cleverer and more learned person than themselves, had no objection on the score of taste, and were naturally conciliated by his partisanship on their own side. And, clever as he was, he was not too clever for them. He knew that they cared nothing about consistency, nothing about chivalry, nothing about logic. He could make just enough and not too much parade of facts and figures to impress them. And above all he had that invaluable gift of belief in himself and in his own fallacies which no demagogue can do without. I do not know a more fatal delusion than the notion, entertained by many persons, that a mere charlatan, a conscious charlatan, can be effective as a statesman, especially on the popular side. Such a one may be an excellent understrapper; but he will never be a real leader.

In this respect, however, Cobbett is only a lesson, a memory, and an example, which are all rather dead things. In respect of his own native literary genius he is still a thing alive and delectable. I have endeavored, as far as has been possible in treating a large subject in little room, to point out his characteristics in this respect also. But as happens with all writers of his kidney he is not easily to be characterized. Like certain wines he has the *goût du terroir*; and that gust is rarely or never definable in words. It is, however, I think critically safe to say that the intensity and peculiarity of Cobbett's literary savor are in the ratio of his limitation. He was content to ignore so vast a number of things, he so bravely pushed his ignorance into contempt of them and

almost into denial of their real existence, that the other things are real for him and in his writings to a degree almost unexampled. I am not the first by many to suggest that we are too diffuse in our modern imagination, that we are cumbered about too many things. No one could bring this accusation against Cobbett; for immense as his variety is in particulars, these particulars group themselves under comparatively few general heads. I do not think I have been unjust in suggesting that this ideal was little more than the bellyful, that Messer. Gaster was not only his first but his one and sufficient master of arts. He was not irreligious, he was not immoral; but his religion and his morality were of the simplest and most matter-of-fact kind. Philosophy, æsthetics, literature, the more abstract sciences, even refinements of sensual comfort and luxury he cared nothing for. Indeed he had a strong dislike to most of them. He must always have been fighting about something; but I think his polemics might have been harmlessly parochial at another time. It is marvellous how this resolute confinement of view at once sharpens and sublimates the eyesight within the confines. He has somewhere a really beautiful and almost poetical passage of enthusiasm over a great herd of oxen as "so much splendid meat." He can see the swells of the downs, the flashing of the winter bournes as they spring from the turf where they have lain hid, the fantastic outline of the oak woods, the reddening sweep of the great autumn fields of corn as few have seen them, and can express them all with rare force and beauty in words. But he sees all these things conjointly and primarily from the point of view of the mutton that the downs will breed and the rivers water, the faggots that the laborer will bring home at evening, the bread he will bake and the beer he will brew — strictly according to the precepts of "Cottage Economy." It may be to some minds a strange and almost incredible combination. It is not so to mine, and I am sure that by dint of it and by dint of holding himself to it he achieved his actual success of literary production. To believe in nothing very much, or in a vast number of things dispersedly, may be the secret of criticism; but to believe in something definite, were it only the bellyful, and to believe in it furiously and exclusively is, with almost all men, the secret of original art.

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

From Longman's Magazine.

THE COMING OF SUMMER.*

BY RICHARD JEFFERIES, AUTHOR OF "THE GAMEKEEPER AT HOME," ETC., ETC.

THE June sky is of the deepest blue when seen above the fresh foliage of the oaks in the morning before the sun has filled the heavens with his meridian light. To see the blue at its best it needs something to form a screen so that the azure may strike the eye with its fulness undiminished by its own beauty. For if you look at the open sky such a breadth of the same hue tones itself down, but let the eye rise upwards along a wall of oak spray, then at the rim the rich blue is thick, quite thick, opaque, and steeped in luscious color. Unless, indeed, upon the high downs—there the June sky is too deep even for the brilliancy of the light, and requires no more screen than the hand put up to shade the eyes. These level plains by the Thames are different, and here I like to see the sky behind and over an oak.

About Surbiton the oaks come out into leaf earlier than in many places; this spring there were oak leaves appearing on April 24, yet so backward are some of them that, while all the rest were green, there were two in the hedge of a field by the Ewell Road still dark within ten days of June. They looked dark because their trunks and boughs were leafless against a background of hawthorn, elm, and other trees in full foliage, the clover flowering under them, and May bloom on the hedge. They were black as winter, and even now, on the first of June, the leaves are not fully formed. The trees flowered in great perfection this spring; many oaks were covered with their green pendants, and they hung from the sycamores. Except the chestnuts, whose bloom can hardly be overlooked, the flowering of the trees is but little noticed; the elm is one of the earliest, and becomes ruddy—it is as early as the catkins on the hazel; willow, aspen, oak, sycamore, ash, all have flower or catkin—even the pine, whose fructification is very interesting. The pines or Scotch firs by the Long Ditton road hang their sweeping branches to the verge of the footpath, and the new cones, the sul-

phur farina, and the fresh shoots are easily seen. The very earliest oak to put forth its flowers is in a garden on Oak Hill; it is green with them, while yet the bitter winds have left a sense of winter in the air.

There is a broad streak of bright yellow—charlock—in the open, arable field beyond the Common. It lights up the level landscape, the glance falls on it immediately. Field beans are in flower, and their scent comes sweet even through the dust of the Derby day. Red heads of trifolium dot the ground; the vetches have long since been out and are so still; along the hedges parsley forms a white fringe. The charlock seems late this year; it is generally up well before June; the first flowers by the roadside or rickyard, in a waste, dry corner. Such dry, waste places send up plants to flower, such as charlock and poppy, quicker than happens in better soil, but they do not reach nearly the height or size. The field beans are short from lack of rain; there are some reeds in the ditch by them, and these, too, are short; they have not half shot up yet for the same reason. On the sward by the Long Ditton road the goatsbeard is up; it grows to some size there every season, but is not very common elsewhere. It is said to close its sepals at noon, and was therefore called "Jack-go-to-bed-at-noon," but in fact it shuts much earlier, and often does not open at all, and you may pass twenty times and not see it open. Its head is like that of the dandelion, and children blow it to see what's o'clock in the same way. It forms a large ball, and browner; dandelion seed balls are white. The grass is dotted with them now; they give a glossy, silky appearance to the meadows. Tiny pink geranium flowers show on bunches of dusty grass; silver weed lays its yellow, buttercup-like flower on the ground, placing it in the angle of the road and the sward, where the sward makes a ridge. Cockspur grass—three claws and a spur like a cock's foot—is already whitened with pollen; already in comparison, for the grasses are late to lift their heads this summer. As the petals of the May fall the young leaves appear, small and green, to gradually enlarge through the haytime.

A slight movement of the leaves on a branch of birch shows that something living is there, and presently the little head and neck of a whitethroat peers over them, and then under, looking above and beneath each leaf, and then with a noise-

* This paper, which was recently found by Mrs. Jefferies among her husband's papers, was probably written on June 1, 1881, and the succeeding days. It contains one or two resemblances to the famous "Pageant of Summer," which, however, did not appear till the number of this magazine for June, 1883.—*Ed. Longman's Magazine.*

less motion passing on to the next. Another whitethroat follows immediately, and there is not a leaf forgotten nor a creeping thing that can hide from them. Every tree and every bush is visited by these birds, and others of the insect-feeders; the whole summer's day they are searching, and the caterpillar, as it comes down on a thread, slipping from the upper branches, only drops into their beaks. Birds, too, that at other periods feed on grain and seed, now live themselves, and bring up their young, upon insects.

I went to look over a gate to see how the corn was rising — it is so short, now in June, that it will not hide a hare — and on coming near there was a cock chaffinch perched on the top, a fine bird in full color. He did not move though I was now within three yards, nor till I could have almost touched him did he fly; he had a large caterpillar in his beak, and no doubt his nest or the young from it were in the hedge. In feeding the young birds the old ones always perch first at a short distance, and after waiting a minute proceed to their fledglings. Should a blackbird come at full speed across the meadow and stay on a hedgetop, and then go down into the mound, it is certain that his nest is there. If a thrush frequents a tree, flying up into the branches for a minute and then descending into the underwood, most likely the young thrushes are there.

Little indeed do the birds care for appropriate surroundings; anything does for them, they do not aim at effect. I heard a titlark singing his loudest, and found him perched on the edge of a tub, formed of a barrel sawn in two, placed in the field for the horses to drink from, as there was no pond. Some swallows are very fond of a notice-board fastened to a pole beside the Hogsmill bank. Upon its upper edge they perch and twitter sweetly. There is a muddy pond by Tolworth Farm, near the road; it is muddy because a herd of cows drink from and stand in it, stirring up the bottom. An elm overhangs it, and the lower boughs are dead and leafless. On these there are always swallows twittering over the water. Grey and yellow wagtails run along the verge. In the morning the flock of goslings who began to swim in the pond, now grown large and grey, arrange themselves in a double row, some twenty or thirty of them, in loose order, tuck their bills under their wings, and sleep. Two old birds stand in the rear as if in command of the detachment. A sow, plastered with mud like the rhi-

noceri in the African lakes, lies on the edge of the brown water, so nearly the hue of the water and the mire and so exactly at their juncture as to be easily overlooked. But the sweet summer swallows sing on the branches; they do not see the wallowing animal, they see only the sunshine and the summer, golden buttercups and blue sky.

In the hollow at Long Ditton I had the delight, a day or two since, to see a kingfisher. There is a quiet lane, and at the bottom in a valley two ponds, one in enclosed grounds, the other in a meadow opposite. Standing there a minute to see if there was a martin among the birds with which the pond in the grounds is thickly covered, something came shooting straight towards me, and swerving only a yard or two to pass me, a kingfisher went by. His blue wings, his ruddy front, the white streak beside his neck, and long bill, were all visible for a moment; then he was away straight over the meadow, the directness of his course enabling it to be followed for some time till he cleared the distant hedge, probably going to visit his nest. Kingfishers, though living by the stream, often build a good way from water. The months have lengthened into years since I saw one here before, sitting on the trunk of a willow which bends over the pond in the mead. The tree rises out of the water and is partly in it; it is hung with moss, and the kingfisher was on the trunk within a foot or so of the surface. After that there came severe winters, and till now I did not see another here. So that the bird came upon me unexpectedly out from the shadow of the trees that overhang the water, past me, and on into the sunshine over the buttercups and sorrel of the field.

This hollow at Long Ditton is the very place of singing birds; never was such a place for singing — the valley is full of music. In the oaks blackbirds whistle; you do not often see them, they are concealed by the thick foliage up on high, for they seek the top branches which are more leafy, but once now and then they quietly flutter across to another perch. The blackbird's whistle is very human, like a human being playing the flute; an uncertain player, now drawing forth a bar of a beautiful melody and then losing it again. He does not know what quiver or what turn his note will take before it ends; the note leads him and completes itself. It is a song which strives to express the singer's keen delight, the singer's exquisite

appreciation of the loveliness of the days ; the golden glory of the meadow, the light, the luxurious shadows, the indolent clouds reclining on their azuré couch. Such thoughts can only be expressed in fragments, like a sculptor's chips thrown off as the inspiration seizes him, not mechanically sawn to a set line. Now and again the blackbird feels the beauty of the time, the large white daisy stars, the grass with yellow-dusted tips, the air which comes so softly, unperceived by any precedent rustle of the hedge, the water which runs slower, held a while by rootlet, flag, and forget-me-not. He feels the beauty of the time and he must say it. His notes come like wild flowers, not sown in order. The sunshine opens and shuts the stops of his instrument. There is not an oak without a blackbird, and there are others afar off in the hedges. The thrushes sing louder here than anywhere; they really seem to have louder notes; they are all round. Thrushes appear to vary their songs with the period of the year; they sing loudly now, but more plaintively and delicately in the autumn. Warblers and willow wrens sing out of sight among the trees, they are easily hidden by a leaf; ivy leaves are so smooth, with an enamelled surface, that high up as the wind moves them they reflect the sunlight and scintillate. Greenfinches in the elms never cease love-making, and love-making needs much soft talking. There is a nightingale in a bush by the lane which sings so loud the hawthorn seems to shake with the vigor of his song; too loud, though a nightingale, if you stand at the verge of the boughs, as he would let you without alarm; further away it becomes sweet and softer. Yellow-hammers call from the trees up towards the arable fields. There are but a few of them; it is the place of singing birds.

The doves in the copse are nearer the house this year; I see them more often in the field at the end of the garden. As the dove rises the white fringe on the tip of the tail becomes visible, especially when flying up into a tree. One afternoon one flew up into a hornbeam close to the garden, beside it in fact, and perched there full in view, not twenty yards at farthest. At first he sat upright, raising his neck and watching us in the garden; then, in a minute or so, turned and fluttered down to his nest. The wood-pigeons are more quiet now; their whoo-hoo-ing is not so frequently heard. By the sounds up in the elms at the top of the Brighton Road

(at the end of Langley Lane) the young rooks have not yet all flown, though it is the end of the first week in June. There is a little pond near the rookeries and by it a row of elms. From one of these a heavy bough has just fallen without the least apparent cause. There is no sign of lightning, nor does it even look decayed; the wood has fractured short off; it came down with such force that the ends of the lesser branches are broken and turned up, though as it was the lowest limb it had not far to fall, showing the weight of the timber. There has been no hurricane of wind, nothing at all to cause it, yet this thick bough snapped. No other tree is subject to these dangerous falls of immense limbs, without warning or apparent cause, so that it is not safe to rest under elms. An accident might not occur once in ten years, nevertheless the risk is there. Elms topple over before gales which scarcely affect other trees, or only tear off a few twigs. Two have thus been thrown recently—within eighteen months—in the fields opposite Tolworth Farm. The elm drags up its own roots, which are often only a fringe round its butt, and leaves a hollow in the earth, as if it had been simply stood on end and held by these guy-ropes. Other trees do indeed fall in course of time, but not till they are obviously on the point of tottering, but the elm goes down in full pride of foliage. By this pond there is a rough old oak, which is the peculiar home of some titmice; they were there every day far back on the frost and snow, and their sharp notes sounded like some one chipping the ice on the horsepond with an iron instrument. Probably, before now, they have had a nest in a crevice.

The tallest grass yet to be seen is in a little orchard on the right-hand side of the Long Ditton road. This little orchard is a favorite spot of mine, meaning, of course, to look at; it is a natural orchard and left to itself. The palings by the road are falling, and held up chiefly by the brambles and the ivy that has climbed up them. There are trees on the left and trees on the right; a fine spruce fir at the back. The apple-trees are not set in straight lines; they were at first, but some have died away and left an irregularity. The trees themselves lean this way and that; they are scarred and marked as it were with lichen and moss. It is the home of birds. A blackbird had a nest this spring in the bushes on the left side, a nightingale in the bushes on the right side, and

there he sang and sang for hours every morning. A sharp, relentless shrike lives in one of the trees close by, and is perpetually darting across the road upon insects on the sward among the fern there. There are several thrushes who reside in this orchard besides the lesser birds. Swallows sometimes twitter from the tops of the apple-trees. As the grass is so safe from intrusion one of the earliest buttercups flowers here. The apple bloom appears rosy on the bare boughs only lately scoured by the east wind. After a time the trees are in full bloom, set about into the green of the hedges and bushes and the dark spruce behind. Bennets, the flower of the grass, come up. The first bennet is to green things what a swallow is to the breathing creatures of summer. White horse-chestnut blooms stand up in their stately way, lighting the path, which is strewn with fallen oak flower. May appears on the hawthorn; there is an early bush of it. Now the grass is so high the flowers are lost under it, even the buttercups are overtopped, and soon as the young apples take form and shape white bramble bloom will cover the bushes by the palings. Acorns will show on the oaks; the berries will ripen from red to black beneath. Along the edge of the path, where the dandelions and plantains are thick with seed, the greenfinches will come down and select those they like best; this they often do by the footpath beside the road. Lastly, the apples become red; the beech in the corner has an orange spray, and cones hang long and brown upon the spruce. The thrushes after silence sing again, and autumn approaches. But, pass when you may, this little orchard has always something because it is left to itself—I had written neglected, I struck the word out, for this is not neglect, this is true attention, to leave it to itself, so that the young trees trail over the bushes and stay till the berries fall of their own over-ripeness, if perchance spared by the birds; so that the dead brown leaves lie and are not swept away unless the wind pleases; so that all things follow their own course and bent. Almost opposite, by autumn, when the reapers are busy with the sheaves, the hedge is white with the large trumpet flowers of the greater convolvulus. The hedgerow seems made of convolvulus then, nothing but convolvulus; nowhere else does the flower flourish so strongly, and the bines remain till the following spring. This little orchard, without a path through

it, without a border, or a parterre, or a terrace, is a place to sit down and dream in, notwithstanding that it touches the road, for thus left to itself it has acquired an atmosphere of peace and stillness such as belongs to and grows up in woods and far-away coombs of the hills. A stray passer-by would go on without even noticing it, it is so commonplace and unpretentious, merely a corner of meadow irregularly dotted with apple-trees; a place that needs frequent glances and a dreamy mood to understand as the birds understand it. They are always here, even in the winter, starlings and blackbirds particularly, who resort to a kind of furrow there, which, even in frost, seems to afford them some food. In the spring thrushes move along, rustling the fallen leaves as they search behind the arum sheaths unrolling beside the palings, or under the shelter of the group of trees where arum roots are plentiful. There are nooks and corners from which shy creatures can steal out from the shadow and be happy. The dew falls softly, more noiseless than snow, and a star shines to the north over the spruce fir. By day there is a loving streak of sunshine somewhere among the tree trunks; by night a star above. The trees are nothing to speak of in size or height, but they seem always to bloom well and to be fruitful; tree-climbers run up these and then go off to the elms.

Beside the Long Ditton road, up the gentle incline on the left side, the broad sward is broken by thickets and brake like those of a forest. If a forest were cleared, as those in America are swept away before the axe, but a line of underwood left beside the highway, the result would be much the same as may be seen here when the bushes and fern are in perfection. Thick hawthorn bushes stand at unequal distances surrounded with brake; one with a young oak in the centre. Fern extends from one thicket to the other, and brambles fence the thorns, which are themselves well around. From such covers the boar was started in old English days, the fawns hide behind and about them even now in many a fair park, and where there are no deer they are frequented by hares. So near the dust which settles on them as the wheels raise it, of course, every dog that passes runs through, and no game could stay an hour, but they are the exact kind of cover game like. One morning this spring, indeed, I noticed a cock pheasant calmly walking along the ridge of a furrow in the ploughed field,

parted from these bushes by the hedge. He was so near the highway that I could see the ring about his neck. I have seen peewits or green plovers in the same field, which is now about to be built on. But though no game could stay an hour in such places, lesser birds love them, white-throats build there, goldcrests come down from the dark pines opposite — they seem fond of pines — yellow-hammers sit and sing on them, and they are visited all day long by one or other. The little yellow flowers of tormentil are common in the grass as autumn approaches, and grasshoppers, which do not seem plentiful here, sing there. Some betony flowers are opposite on the other sward. There is a marshy spot by one of the bushes where among the rushes various semi-aquatic grasses grow. Blackberries are thick in favorable seasons — like all fruit they are an uncertain crop; and hawkweeds are there everywhere on the sward towards the edge. The peculiar green of fern, which is more of a relief to the eye than any other shrub with which I am acquainted, so much so that I wonder it is not more imitated, is remarkable here when the burning July sun shines on the white dust thus fringed. By then trees are gone off in color, the hedges are tired with heat, but the fern is a soft green which holds the glance. This varies much with various seasons; this year the fern is particularly late from a lack of moisture, but sometimes it is really beautiful between these bushes. It is cut down in its full growth by those who have charge of the road, and the scene is entirely destroyed for the remainder of the season; it is not often that such bushes and such fern are found beside the highway, and if not any annoyance to the residents, are quite as worthy of preservation (not "preservation" by beadle) as open spaces like commons. Children, and many of larger growth, revel about them, gathering the flowers in spring and summer, the grasses and the blackberries in autumn. It is but a strip of sward, but it is as wild as if in the midst of a forest. A pleasure to every one — therefore destroy it.

In the evening from the rise of the road here I sometimes hear the cry of a barn owl skirting the hedge of Southborough Park, and disappearing under the shadow of the elms that stand there. The stars appear and the whole dome of the summer night is visible, for in a level plain like this a slight elevation brings the horizon into view. Without moon the June

nights are white; a faint white light shows through the trees of Southborough Park northwards; the west has not lost all its tint over the Ditton hollow; white flowers stand in the grass; white road, white flint-heaps even, white clouds, and the stars, too, light without color.

By day the breeze comes south and west, free over fields, over corn and grass and hedgerow; so slight mound as this mere rise in the riverside plain lifts you up into the current of the air. Where the wind comes the sunlight is purer.

The sorrel is now high and ripening in the little meadows beside the road just beyond the orchard. As it ripens the meadow becomes red, for the stalks rise above the grass. This is the beginning of the feast of seeds. The sorrel ripens just as the fledglings are leaving the nest; if you watch the meadow a minute you will see the birds go out to it, now flying up a moment and then settling again. After a while comes the feast of grain; then another feast of seeds among the stubble, and the ample fields, and the furze of the hills; then berries, and then winter, and the last seed.

A June rose. Something caught my eye on the top of the high hawthorn hedge beside the Brighton Road one evening as it was growing dusk, and on looking again there was a spray of briar in flower, two roses in full bloom and out of reach, and one spray of three growing buds. So it is ever with the June rose. It is found unexpectedly, and when you are not looking for it. It is a gift, not a discovery, or anything earned — a gift like love and happiness. With ripening grasses the rose comes, and the rose is summer; till then it is spring. On the green banks — waste places — beside the "New Road" (Kingsdown Road formerly) the streaked pink convolvulus is in flower; a sign that the spring forces have spent themselves, that the sun is near his fulness. The flower itself is shapely, yet it is not quite welcome; it says too plainly that we are near the meridian. There are months of warmth to follow — brilliant sunshine and new beauties; but the freshness, the joyous looking forward of spring is gone. Upon these banks the first coltsfoot flowers in March, the first convolvulus in summer, and almost the last hawkweed in autumn. A yellow vetchling, too, is now opening its yellow petals beside the Long Ditton road; another summer flower, which comes in as the blue veronica is leaving the sward.

As tall as the young corn the mayweed fringes the arable fields with its white rays and yellow centre, somewhat as the broad moon-daisies stand in the grass. By this time generally the corn is high above the mayweed, but this year the flower is level with its shelter. The pale corn buttercup is in flower by the New Road, not in the least overshadowed by the crops at the edge of which it grows. By the stream through Tolworth Common spotted persicaria is rising thickly, but even this strong-growing plant is backward and checked on the verge of the shrunken stream. The showers that have since fallen have not made up for the lack of the April rains, which in the most literal sense cause the flowers of May and June. Without those early spring rains the wild flowers cannot push their roots and develop their stalks in time for the summer sun. The sunshine and heat finds them unprepared. In the ditches the square-stemmed figwort is conspicuous by its dark green. It is very plentiful about Surbiton. Just outside the garden in a waste corner the yellow flowers of celandine are overhung with wild hops and white bryony, two strong plants of which have climbed up the copse hedge, twining in and out each other. Both have vine-like leaves; but the hops are wrinkled, those of the bryony hairy or rough to the touch. The hops seem to be the most powerful, and hold the bryony in the background. The young spruce firs which the wood-pigeon visited in the spring with an idea of building there looks larger and thicker now the fresh green needles have appeared.

In the woodland lane to Claygate the great elder bushes are coming into flower, each petal a creamy white. The dogwood, too, is opening, and the wild guelder-roses there are in full bloom. There is a stile from which a path leads across the fields thence to Hook. The field by the stile was fed off in spring, and now is yellow with birdfoot lotus, which tints it because the grass is so short. From the grass at every footstep a crowd of little "hoppers" leap in every direction, scattering themselves hastily abroad. The little mead by the copse here is more open to the view this year, as the dry winter has checked the growth of ferns and rushes. There is a flock of missel-thrushes in it; the old birds feed the young, who can fly well, in the centre of the field. Lesser birds come over from the hedges to the bunches of rushes. Slowly wandering along the lane and looking over the mound on the right

hand (cow-wheat with yellow lip is in flower on the mound), there are glimpses between the bushes and the Spanish chestnut-trees of far-away blue hills—blue under the summer sky.

From Chambers' Journal.
BRICK TEA.

EVERY reader of books of Eastern travel is familiar with the name of brick tea, but few writers have taken the trouble to explain, even in the roughest manner, what is the actual character of the commodity, and still less how it is made. It is, as yet, a peculiarly Chinese manufacture, although if our Indian planters obtain the access into the markets of Tibet for which they are longing, it will have to become a regular product in the gardens of Assam and Cachar, although possibly not in Ceylon, as the consuming markets are in central Asia.

In a former article we explained the differences in the processes of tea manufacture in China and in India (see "The Revolution in Tea," *Journal*, Aug. 10, 1889), and showed how the falling-off in favor of the Chinese tea in Europe is chiefly due to the carelessness with which it is prepared for market. There is more than carelessness, however, in China—there is also fraud in packing, and "lie tea" is a known article of commerce in some parts of China. Now, lie tea goes to the making of brick tea for the Tibetan, which is the principal market.

The area on which tea is grown for this special purpose is an extensive one in the western provinces, of which Yung-ching may be called the centre; but the plant is a very different one from the carefully cultivated bushes of eastern China, from which European tea is made. For one thing, the Yung-ching plant is allowed to grow much higher—often to fifteen feet—and it has a large and coarse leaf, two to two and a half inches long. The best brick tea is made in gardens where these trees are planted in rows and kept in fair order; but, according to Mr. Colborne Baber, the larger portion of tea for Tibet is supplied from bushes which are allowed to grow pretty much at their own sweet will along the borders of the fields and on the hillsides—in fact, from half wild plants. In the fourth year these trees begin to yield, and they continue productive for many years. In June, the pickings

begin. There is, first, the young upper leaves, which the Chinese keep for themselves; second, the leaves of young plants; and third, everything that can be stripped from the trees, including twigs and sticks. It is the last picking which is usually turned into "bricks."

This is the process of manufacture. The leaves and twigs, after being sun-dried, are put into a cloth and suspended over a boiler to be steamed. Meanwhile, the mould is got ready, consisting of four short boards set up on end and securely fastened, with an internal space of about nine inches by three and a half inches. Within this cavity is placed a woven mat-basket, and into this the softened leaves and twigs are dropped in small handfuls, with a little rice-water to cause the mass to adhere. As layer after layer is added, the stuff is compressed by powerful blows from an iron-shod rammer. Next the coarser twigs are dried and ground to powder, and sprinkled over the other mass, or between the layers, so as to become welded in. The flexible basket round the tea prevents the mass from taking too angular a shape, as sharp corners on the bricks would make them awkward to carry on the long journey they have to perform.

After the mould is filled and sufficiently compressed, it is taken to pieces, and the cake, still within the mat, or basket, is taken again to the fire to be thoroughly dried. Then the ends of the mat are drawn together and closed up, and the *pao*, or cake, is ready for transport to Ta-chien-lu, where it undergoes further preparation. It should be mentioned that the cakes are weighed after being steamed, and are sold on that weight, although they lose about a third after being dried. At Ta-chien-lu they are cut into uniform sizes and re-packed as *chuan*, or bricks.

The best kind of brick tea, such as is meant for the Russian market, is more carefully prepared. The choice leaves only are taken, and are spread in the sun until slightly withered. They are then rolled in the hand until they become moist with exudation, and pressed into small balls, which are left to ferment. When fermentation begins, they are ready for the moulds, and the process is pretty much as above described, but without the admixture of the twig-dust.

From Yung-ching and the other places of manufacture, the tea is carried either by porters or on mules to Ta-chien-lu, a distance of from one to two hundred miles, over two mountain passes seven thousand

feet high. A man will carry from eight to twelve paos on his back all the distance — a weight of from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds, sometimes a good deal more, and over terrible heights where every step must be picked. The journey will take a porter about twenty days, and a mule about half the time; but the mule can carry only half as much as the porter.

A brick should weigh sixty Chinese ounces; but even the better quality seldom exceeds fifty-five ounces, while the common quality usually weighs in transport from forty to forty-five ounces. Thus the number of bricks transported hardly affords a fair test of the actual quantity; but it is computed that the annual export of brick tea from western China to Tibet is not less than twelve million English pounds. This seems an enormous quantity; but it is to be remarked that, to the Tibetans, tea is an absolute necessity, not a luxury. They drink it at all hours, and without it grow restless, discontented, and unhappy. It is not cheap, however, as the Lamas keep the retail trade in their own hands. The selling price ranges from about sixpence to two or three shillings per pound, according to the distance from the tea-route; but the Lamas will, it is said, often exact in payment labor and produce from the people, who have no choice of markets.

This is how the brick tea is used in Tibet. The teapot is something like a butter-churn, into which a portion of the brick is thrown. After boiling, the infusion is passed through a strainer, and a little salt is added, after which the churn is stirred some twenty times. Then a lump of butter is added, and the churning repeated for some hundred or hundred and fifty turns. The tea is then ready for drinking, but of course has little or no resemblance to the fragrant and cheerful cup sacred to English "five o'clocks;" or even to the less fragrant and more astringent beverage with which too many working-women, and men also, injure their nerves and their stomachs. But astringency is what the Tibetan covets, and he would not thank you for a cup of choice Pekoe. The taste of the Tibetan infusion has been humorously likened by Mr. Colborne Baber to something like weak English tea with rich milk but without any sugar or tea. The tea-principle is there, affecting the flavor of the butter and water, but not giving the taste of tea.

How highly this trashy compound is prized in the land of the Lamas, however,

may be inferred from the fact that not very long ago, and before rupees became comparatively abundant, tea-bricks were used as currency. Even yet, it is said, in some parts of the country a brick of tea is not merely worth a rupee, but is used as a rupee for purposes of trade and without regard to weight. This practice, however, has not been without its retributive side. The Lamas of Batang had stored up a vast quantity of tea-bricks as reserve treasure, regarding each brick as equal to a rupee. But when the Indian money began to circulate, and the Lamas wanted to convert their tea-money into silver, they found they could only do so at a loss of nearly forty per cent. Hoarding does not always pay, and one does not pity the monks, who had been exacting the uttermost anna out of the people for their indispensable tea.

The Indian rupee, it should be said, began to find its way in quantity into Tibet about five-and-twenty years ago, and is now fairly abundant there. The Russian silver rouble is said to be current also, and the circulation of these coins has done a great deal to break down the Lamas' monopoly of tea.

To come back to Ta-chien-lu, where the bricks pass into Tibetan hands. They are there wrapped in skins and carried in pack-saddles to Batang. These are curious and ingenious contrivances. Two light boards about fourteen inches long, thickly padded with cloth and felt, are connected by two wooden bows, and secured to a wooden crupper. From the bows hang loops of hide in which the packages are suspended, in such a way that if the burden strikes any obstacle in a dangerous pass, the package becomes detached and rolls away without overbalancing the animal. Horses, mules, and yaks are used for conveying the tea to Batang, where is the great depot and centre of the domestic trade.

To reach Batang from Assam our Indian tea would have to cross the Patkoi Hills to Burma, thence into Yun-nan, and so northward again by Weisee, a distance of seven hundred and fifty miles.

It is said that the cost of carriage alone would be more than the selling price of Chinese tea at Batang; but time, no doubt, would economize transit, and the Tibetans might be educated into paying a better price for better tea, if free-trade relations were only established between India and

Tibet. It is certainly a tantalizing thing to think that the largest tea-consumers in the world—for the Tibetans are believed to consume from half an ounce to one ounce of tea per head per day—should be so near our Indian tea gardens, and yet, for all trade purposes, as far off as the moon. Darjeeling is, by road, within a very few days' journey from Lhassa; and indeed Calcutta itself is as near, as the crow flies, to the capital of Tibet as Paris is to Berlin. And then one could offer the Tibetans genuine, good, wholesome, fragrant tea, made into bricks if they like, but not made out of brushwood and rubbish. Meanwhile, the remarkable fact is that the best tea in the world goes to Russia; and the worst tea in the world is eagerly bought and voraciously consumed in Tibet. The brick tea of Asiatic Russia is delicious; the brick tea of exclusive Tibet is nauseous trash.

Before leaving the subject, some interesting and little-known varieties of tea encountered by Mr. Baber may be mentioned. In the mountainous region of Kiating he discovered two remarkable varieties. The monks of Mount O-mi, or Mount O, use a plant which produces an infusion naturally sweet, and tasting, as brewed, just like coarse Congou with a large addition of brown sugar. This is natural tea-and-sugar. The plant is grown on the mountain-slopes near the monastery, and does not seem to be known elsewhere. The leaf is to all appearance just like that of an ordinary tea-leaf, and probably the saccharine essence may be due to the soil.

The other curiosity is a natural tea-and-milk. This is a wild plant, growing in an elevated region without cultivation, and yielding an infusion which tastes just like tea and milk, without sugar, or perhaps more like tea and butter. This plant is found in an uninhabited region west of Kiating, at an elevation of six thousand feet and upwards, and in leafy shrubs about fifteen feet high. Not merely the leaf but the whole plant is used to make the infusion. Even the wood when chopped up and boiled along with a few dried leaves yields a strongly colored tea, with much the same flavor as the Tibetans produce from their bricks and butter. Botanists may be able to explain these phenomena, and perhaps to classify the plants in some other family than the tea-plant.

